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J. C. McMULLEN

WIVES TO BURN

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Walter H. Baker Company, Boston

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By Adam Applebud

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WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

41 Winter Street, Boston, Mass.

WIVES TO BURN

A Play in Three Acts

By

J. C. McMULLEN

Author of "When a Feller Needs a Friend," "Turning the Trick," "The Boob," "Deal 'Em Over," etc.

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WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

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Wives to Burn

CHARACTERS

BERT PARKER, *a bank clerk.*
DICK GIRARD, RICH DOUGLAS } *his friends.*
STEVE, JACK } *ranch hands.*
DANIEL EASTON, *"from Turkey."*
INSPECTOR CLANCY, *of Central Station.*
MAYME CLIFFORD, *a cafeteria cashier.*
POLLY PALMER, BETTY KING } *in the "movies."*
AUNT HETTY BINGLE, *the boarding-house keeper.*
GERT, *her "hired girl."*

TIME. The present.
SCENE. Los Angeles, Cal.

ACT I. Living-room at Miss Bingle's, 7:00 P. M.
ACT II. The same, 7:45 P. M.
ACT III. The same, 8:30 P. M.

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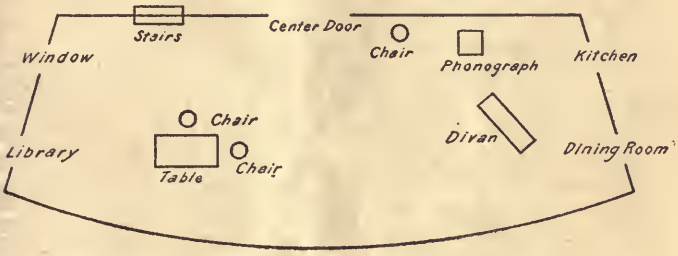
DIRECTIONS FOR SCENERY

Action of play is continuous. Diagram of stage setting given below. Can be made more elaborate if desired. 'Phone on table. Curtains over window arranged in such a way that person can easily stand behind them unseen from others on stage. Mirror on wall between C. D. and stairs. Man playing Inspector can double for negro woman if desired, the latter not having a speaking part. Pieces of wood can be painted to give the appearance of iron and used by Polly in last act, instead of the real article.



COSTUMES AND CHARACTERISTICS

BERT, DICK and RICH. Young men of twenty-four or twenty-five. Business suit throughout play.

STEVE. Young man of twenty-four. Full Turkish costume. Overcoat for last act.

JACK. Young man of twenty-one. Harem costume for Turkish woman, with face veil. Long overcoat for last act.

DANIEL. A man in the fifties. Business suit.

INSPECTOR. A man of thirty-five or forty. Business suit.

MAYME. A slangy girl of about twenty-five, dressed in the extreme of style. Should be played forcefully, as she practically dominates the other characters.

POLLY and BETTY. Girls of twenty-two or twenty-three. Ordinary street dress and hat. Large dress for Polly to make up as fat woman in ACT III.

AUNT HETTY. Precise old maid in the forties. Wears nose glasses. In last act changes to wedding dress of style twenty-five years previous to play.

GERT. English "slavey" type. Dress should not be exaggerated to make the part ridiculous. In last act changes to neat house dress.

NEGRO WOMAN. A large negro woman, dressed in gay colors, with heavy face veil.

Wives to Burn

ACT I

SCENE.—*Living-room,* MISS BINGLE'S *boarding-house.*

(BERT *enters from dining-room. Closes door very carefully behind him and stands at door a moment listening. Crosses to door* C., *and looks out into hall. Then to foot of stairs and pauses a moment. Then goes to 'phone, table* R.)

BERT. Wilshire 4324.....Speak to Miss Palmer, please.....Oh, hello! That you, Polly?..... Um-hum. Yes. It's me all right.....Yes..... Where were you last night? (MAYME *enters from dining-room; goes to mirror back, fixes hair, etc.*) Oh, you were?.....What did he say?.....He did? What did you say?.....You did? Then what did.....

MAYME (*comes forward*). Snap out of it! Snap out of it!

BERT (*savagely, to* MAYME). Shut up! (*In 'phone, very sweetly*). Oh, no, no, no. Not *you,* dear. I wouldn't tell *you* to shut up. Now what were you saying?.....Oh, you did? Well, what do you know about that?.....The idea!.....Well, what do you think of that? Then what did Honey do? (MAYME *shows disgust.*) Is that so! Then what did dearie do?

MAYME (*grabs 'phone and hangs up receiver*). Aw! Step on it! Step on it! What do you think I am? Don't you suppose I get enough of that soft mush all day

from old bald-headed guys as don't know no bett
without comin' home to me little old boarding-house a
listen to a love-sick gink spout (*Imitates* BERT.) "O
You did? Well, what do you know about that? Th
what did Honey do? Oh you did?" If that isn't t
bunk, I don't know what is.

BERT. That was a mean trick, Mayme Cliffo
What will Polly think of me?

(RICH *enters and stands* C. D.)

MAYME. I don't give a whoop what she thinks.
you want to gab, gab, gab to her all the time, hire a ha

(DICK *appears* C. D.)

RICH (*enters with package, followed by* DICK
What's the row?

MAYME. Oh that (*Points to* BERT.) was having h
usual evening gab-fest with his lady-love and I guess
queered it.

DICK (*coming forward*). If you want to talk to h
all the time why don't you marry her?

RICH. I should say so. If you are not talking
her you are talking about her.

(*Goes to phonograph, opens package and places recor
on machine.*)

BERT. You make me sick, the whole bunch of you.
[*Exits by stair.*

MAYME (*looking after him*). How do they get tha
way?

RICH (*goes to kitchen and dining-room door, peep
out, then back to phonograph*). I guess the old lady i
too busy; she won't notice us. (*Starts phonograph.*
Now listen. (*Keeps time with music for a moment.*
Isn't that a pippin? Come on, Mayme.

(*They start dancing.*)

GERT (*sticks head in dining-room door*). Douse th
honky-tonk and be quick. The grouch's comin'.

(*Withdraws head.* RICH *quickly stops phonograph and seats himself on divan, in line with dining-room door, and picks up newspaper.* DICK *sits other end of divan,* MAYME *at table.*)

AUNT (*enters from kitchen and looks suspiciously from one to the other. Goes to phonograph, takes record from machine and reads label*). "The Sque-bibble Blues!" How often have I told you young people I will not have such trash in my house? A nice piece of music to be played in the home of the President of the (*Local.*) Uplift Society. (*Breaks record.*) There, Miss Clifford! (*Hands her record.*) Now don't let this occur again.

MAYME. Why pick on me? I ain't the only one in the room.

AUNT. I know it was you, young lady, don't deny it. [*Exits to kitchen with head up.*

MAYME (*rising, as* RICH *and* DICK *drop their newspapers*). Could yuh beat it! I wonder why she always picks on me?

RICH. You should worry! I paid for the record.

(GERT *stands just outside dining-room door.*)

MAYME. All right, take it then.

(*Throws record toward him.* RICH *ducks and record strikes* GERT, *who is just opening door, causing her to drop bowl of flowers she has in her hands.*)

GERT (*startled*). 'Oo the blue blazes throwed that?

MAYME (*as though shocked*). Why, Gert! You oughtn't use slang.

RICH. The President of the Uplift Society will get you if you don't watch out.

GERT (*indignantly*). Hin Hi walks, mindin' of me own business and Hi gets that. (*Points to broken record.*) Hi'm liable to git me walkin' papers fer it, Hi 'ave. (*Gathers up wreckage.*)

MAYME (*helping her*). I'm sorry, Gert, and if the old Hessian says anything to you, I'll stand by you.

GERT. Hall right. 'Ere goes. (*Starts toward kitchen door. Turns at door.*) Now mind! Hif Hi catches it you 'as to 'elp me hout. [*Exits kitchen*

(*Voices heard outside, as* MAYME, RICH *and* DICK *line up at kitchen door to listen.*)

AUNT (*off stage*). Clumsy ox! How did it happen?
GERT (*off stage*). Me foot tripped and ——
AUNT (*off stage*). Watch your feet after this. I shall take the price of the broken bowl from your wages.
RICH. She was on the job all right.

(*They resume seats as* BERT *enters stairs.*)

BERT (*goes to table and sorts over letters*). Anybody seen a letter for me?
DICK. I haven't.
RICH. Me either; why?
BERT. I have been expecting one for the last three months that has never arrived.

(*Looks over other articles on table.*)

MAYME. Ain't seein' her once a day enough for yuh?
BERT. This isn't a "her." It's from a "him," my Uncle Dan.
MAYME. A real live uncle and a-writin' to yuh?
BERT. Yes.
MAYME. Aunt Het's brother?
BERT. No; Aunt Hetty is only my father's stepsister. Uncle Dan is my mother's brother. He has been in Turkey for the past twenty-five years or so, running some kind of a mining concession, so I understand. Ever since Mother died he has been sending me fifty dollars a month. Three months ago the checks stopped and I've been wondering what's the matter.
MAYME. He ain't a uncle, he's a angel. Talk about luck! Nothin' like that ever walks down the street to meet me, I'll tell the world. Here's a guy as has a aunt, as thinks he's a little angel on a tin horse and won't take

no board money offen him and now he has a uncle as sends him fifty dollars a month without even askin' for it. Ain't some people born with silver spoons in their mouth? Ain't they, though?

BERT. Saturday is Polly's birthday and I wanted that fifty to apply on the prettiest diamond ring in Los Angeles for the prettiest girl in the state of California. (*All groan and turn away from him.*) Well, she is, I tell you!

MAYME. Put on the clutch! Put on the clutch! Don't you suppose we ever get tired hearin' you spout about that girl?

DICK. I should say so. (*Imitates* BERT.) Oh! She's a wonderful girl! Those eyes ——

RICH. And those hair.

MAYME. And those nose. (*All sigh together.*)

BERT (*laughing*). Old stuff!

DICK. Where did you meet her, Bert?

BERT. She came into the bank one day, asking for some information concerning a check, and we got to talking. You know she's the most entertaining girl.

RICH. Oh, no doubt in the world!

BERT. She is, I tell you! She's got a lot of pluck, too. Her mother was a widow on a little dinkey farm back in Ohio. She died over a year ago and left Polly with about $500 and a brother somewhere in California who hadn't written home for over two years. Polly started out with her $500 to hunt her brother. She came into the bank to attend to a little business, I met her, and there you are.

RICH. Has she found this long-lost brother?

BERT. Not yet, but she will. She thinks he is in or around Los Angeles and is working as an extra at the Prince Picture Studio while she looks around.

DICK. Why don't you take us around to see her some time?

BERT. Not on your life.

DICK. Why?

BERT. Because if I did you would be sure to queer me.

MAYME. Oh Mama! I suppose we ain't refined enough for the little dear.

BERT. N-n-no, it isn't that exactly, but, well, she's different.

RICH. Sure! Every fellow's girl is different.

BERT. This one *is*. She doesn't dance——

MAYME. Oi yoi, oi yoi, oi yoi! Bert, the prize shimmie shaker, goin' with a dame as don't dance. Shades of my sainted grandmother! Kin yuh imagine it?

BERT (*quickly*). There! That's it! Polly is not accustomed to that kind of English.

DICK. Oh, I see. And she doesn't dance?

BERT. No, and when she didn't, I naturally told her I didn't either.

RICH. Sweet spirits of nitre! How do you ever expect to get away with a thing like that?

BERT. I can get away with anything if I watch my step, and that's just the reason I have never given any of you a chance to meet her. If you talked with her you would be sure to spill something and then——

(*Shrugs shoulders expressively.*)

RICH. Not if she's the kind of a girl you've been telling us about. A girl that is so good and so noble and so high-minded—— (*Looks around.*) Did I miss anything?

MAYME. And loyal.

RICH. And loyal as Polly is, wouldn't throw you down simply because she found out you danced a little.

DICK. And smoked.

MAYME. And run around at night.

RICH. And take a little nip—when you can get it.

BERT (*angrily*). You're a bunch of knockers! You make me tired. [*Exits on stairs.*

DICK. Gentle disposition.

(*Picks up paper from divan and starts to read.*)

MAYME. I'll say he has. (*Goes to* DICK.) Gimme half.

(DICK *shares paper with her and she sits near table* R.)

DICK. Listen to this, will you? (*Reads.*) "During he Nurses' Annual Ball at the County Hospital last night wo of the inmates of the quarantined ward escaped and re still at large. They will no doubt be captured soon, s they were dressed in masquerade costumes purloined rom the dressing-room."

RICH. Nothing to get excited over in that.

DICK. Not if they got enough costume, but if they appened to pick one for a Salome dancer ——

MAYME. Here's something that's got that beat. Lis- en at it: (*Reads.*) "The will of Lydia Prudence Per- ins, the world's champion fat woman, who tipped the cales at 615 pounds, was found this morning."

RICH. Gee! Lydia was all there when it come to ize. Wasn't she?

MAYME (*reading*). "It was feared for a while that o will had been made and that her entire fortune, mounting to $400,000, would revert to the State. When ıe will was read a forgotten tragedy in her life was un- arthed, which will be the means of benefiting some one f Los Angeles' numerous young men. At the age of venty-five Miss Perkins was engaged to be married to young man, who, almost at the altar, jilted her and oped with her bridesmaid, because, as he stated, his tended wife was too fat, Miss Perkins even then weigh- g in the neighborhood of three hundred pounds. This nbittered the young lady's life and she vowed never to arry. She later entered the show business and pros- ered. When she knew death was coming on she had a nvass made of all the young men of the city whose me began with the same letter as hers, P, and of the e of twenty-five, her age when jilted, and a drawing is take place to decide which of the young men is to be r heir. The only stipulation is that he must marry thin the week of her death, a woman weighing not less an three hundred pounds. Miss Perkins determined at some fat woman would enjoy the married happiness ıich she had missed. Rather a freakish will, you will

say, but the all-important question is, who is to be the happy man?"

RICH. Oh boy! Wish my name began with a P.

DICK. Here too.

MAYME. Not much time, is there, if the young man has to get married before the week's out. To-day's Friday.

RICH. Wouldn't I like to be the one to draw that money? How much is it?

MAYME (*looks at paper*). Four hundred thousand dollars.

DICK. By George! Bert is in on that. He's about twenty-five and his name begins with a P, Parker.

MAYME. Fat chance he has, Bo, fat chance! with him so dippy over that there Polly dame. He'd turn down four million for her. You'd oughta heard him on the 'phone a while ago.

RICH. What's being dippy over Polly got to do with it?

MAYME (*pointing to paper*). Don't it say here he has to marry a woman weighin' three hundred pounds within the week? He'd never be so crazy over Polly if she weighed that much. Believe me!

RICH. That's right, he wouldn't. Do you know, he makes me sick with his everlasting Polly this and Polly that. You would think he had her cinched the way he talks about her.

DICK. Maybe he has.

RICH. Oh, I don't know. There are a few other fellows in Los Angeles beside Bert Parker.

DICK. Evidently not with Polly.

MAYME. You're jealous.

RICH. No, I'm not, but all he talks about is Polly, Polly, Polly, all day long.

DICK. Well, you would like to talk about Betty, Betty, Betty, all day long but you're too darned bashful.

RICH (*pays no attention to* DICK). And how true Polly is to him. (BERT *appears head of stairs, notices they are talking about him and stops.*) All you can hear when you are around the house is his eternal 'phoning to

her or talking about her. And his absolute confidence in her. (*Imitates* BERT.) "Nothing can come between Polly and me." Bah!

DICK. Possibly nothing can.

MAYME. He must know what he is talking about or he wouldn't do so darned much of it.

RICH. I've only got about $600 in bank but I'm willing to bet $500 of it I can make Polly throw him down before to-morrow night.

BERT (*coming down-stairs*). I'll just take that bet.

(*All jump to their feet.*)

RICH. Why, Bert, I ——

BERT. No harm done, none at all. (*Goes to table, takes check-book from pocket and writes check.*) I would simply like to cover that bet. Who'll hold the stakes? (*Rises with check.*)

DICK. What's the matter with little Dick Girard?

BERT. Nothing at all. (*Hands check to* DICK.) Well, Rich, aren't you game?

RICH. Of course I'm game. (*Writes check, which he hands to* DICK.) There you are.

BERT. Now the agreement is, if Polly throws me down by—what time to-morrow?

RICH (*looks at watch*). It's seven o'clock now; make it seven.

BERT. If Polly throws me down by seven o'clock to-morrow night, you get my $500. (*Looks around.*) That's understood.

DICK. That's as I get it. How about you, Mayme?

MAYME. Same here.

BERT. All right. See you later.

(*Exits to library. All stare after him a moment.*)

RICH. Takes it mighty cool; losing five hundred so easily.

DICK. He hasn't lost it yet.

RICH. He will.

MAYME. Sure?

RICH. You bet, I'm sure. He is going to lose it all right. You'll see.

MAYME. You've sure wished a man's job on your hands.

DICK. I should say so.

(*Starts toward stairs, followed by* MAYME.)

RICH. You're going to help me out, aren't you?

DICK (*stops*). What for? I like Bert.

MAYME. So do I.

RICH. Liking him has nothing to do with it. You know you are both as sick as I am of him raving about that girl and her wonderful constancy. Besides, look at the fun we can have out of it.

MAYME. And the hard work. Don't forget the hard work, for it's gonna take some.

RICH. Look here, both of you; if you help me out on this and I win, which I will, I'll split even with you. What do you say?

DICK. I'm in on anything that brings in the money, but it looks rather low-down for us all to work against him.

RICH. You should worry if you make something out of it. How about you, Mayme?

MAYME. I think you're gonna look like a sick clam on a toot by the time you're done with this job, Rich Douglas, and you've got about one chance in a million of winning, but I'll help.

RICH. Now how can we do it?

DICK. Can't you work on her prejudices? You know how straight-laced she is. That is, if what he says is so.

MAYME. Yes, run a divorced wife in on him.

DICK. Or a deserted one.

RICH. Why not both?

MAYME. Have a heart. Do you want to give the poor boob a harem?

DICK. A harem! Say! Stick around! This is going to be good. His Uncle Dan in Turkey hasn't written him for three months. All right, Uncle Dan's dead.

RICH. But what good is that going to do?

DICK. Wait a minute. Uncle Dan's dead and he has

willed to his beloved nephew his favorite wife, Little Bevo. How's that?

MAYME (*admiringly*). Believe me, kid, you got some think-tank up there under your top-knot. (*Taps his head.*) There's something there besides wood, ain't there?

DICK. Oh, I'm there with the ideas all right.

RICH. But who will we get to impersonate the wife?

MAYME. Let me do it. I always did want to wear them cute little pants what the haremettes wear.

DICK. Pants? Those are trouserettes.

RICH. No, we ought to get somebody else. You would be better as the divorced wife, Mayme.

MAYME. And get Gert for the deserted one. She'd be a howl.

DICK. Gert! You couldn't blame a man for deserting her.

RICH. But how about the harem lady?

DICK. That will be a sticker.

MAYME. Well, fix it up between yuh. I'm going up to me room to wash me one and only silk shirt waist for to-morrow. Yuh can dope out what yuh intend doing and I'll join yuh later. [*Exits by stairs.*

RICH. Suppose we go and have a smoke on it. Can't do much before to-morrow anyway.

DICK. I'm with you. Come on.

[*They exit by stairs.*

(*Window is cautiously raised and* STEVE *looks into room. Looks all around and then motions off stage. Enters through window followed by* JACK. *They should be dressed in full Turkish costume,* STEVE *as man,* JACK *as woman.*)

STEVE. All right so far. This looks like a good place to hide until this blows over and we can get out of town.

JACK. You said it. Just because we happened to be sleeping in the same hotel with a gink that had the smallpox is no reason that I can see for locking us up in the pest-house. Br-r-r-r! It makes me shiver yet.

STEVE. Now that we've made our get-away, it's up to us to stay away. If we only had some clothes!

(*Goes to dining-room door and looks off stage.*)

JACK. It's a cinch that the ladies that wear this junk ain't used to cold weather. (STEVE *goes to kitchen door.*) Wonder what the little window blind is for?

(*Throws up face veil.*)

STEVE (*at kitchen door*). Cheese it! Some one's coming!

(*They crawl under couch,* JACK *leaving foot out, toward table, where it can be seen easily.*)

GERT (*enters from kitchen. Arranges furniture, papers on table, etc. Moves lamp on table and finds letter under it. Looks at it closely as though puzzling over address. Sticks letter in apron pocket where it can be seen later by* AUNT HETTY. *Goes to couch to arrange cushions. Notices* JACK'S *foot. Stops suddenly. Looks at foot from different angles. Finally reaches for foot very slowly,* JACK *as slowly drawing it away from her hand under couch. She stands and studies a moment. Then gets down on knees and looks under couch. Rises and screams*). 'Elp!

STEVE (*crawling from under couch, followed by* JACK). Hush! For Heaven's sake don't give us away.

GERT. 'Oo be you? (JACK *on her* R., STEVE L.)

STEVE. We're—we're detectives!

GERT. Detectives! 'Oo's murdered?

JACK. No one yet. But there will be soon if you don't keep your mouth shut.

GERT. Hi'll keep it shut all right. Kin Hi 'elp?

STEVE. Help what?

GERT. Ketch whatever you're after.

JACK (*winks at* STEVE *over* GERT'S *head*). Of course you can help. That's what we came in here for.

STEVE. The first thing is, can you get us something to eat?

GERT. Hi—Hi reckon so.

(*Edges away from them very carefully and then bolts into kitchen.*)

JACK. Pretty soft! Now if we can only get some clothes.

DICK (*at head of stairs*). Well! What have we here?

STEVE. Well, you see, we, that is ——

DICK (*comes down stairs*). What do you call it? A side-show?

(DICK *down* R., STEVE C., JACK L.)

STEVE. I, we —— Help us out, Mr. Whoever-you-are! We just got out of the pest-house and ——

DICK (*makes flying leap for stairs*). Pest-house! Good-night!

STEVE (*grabs his coat*). There's nothing wrong with us. Honest there isn't!

(DICK *keeps as far away from* STEVE *as possible,* STEVE *still holding his coat.*)

JACK. My dad has a cattle ranch up near Lancaster and Steve there works for us. We blew into town about three days ago for a little vacation and took a room at the Savoy. The next day they found smallpox in the place and grabbed the whole bunch of us, but there is nothing wrong with *us.*

DICK. Where did you get that layout?

STEVE. The nurses at the hospital where they took us were having a masquerade ball last night and we saw our chance to get away. We had no clothes, as they had taken ours to be fumigated, I suppose, so as we had nothing else to put on we snitched these and here we are.

DICK. Oh yes! I read about you in the paper. (*Examines their clothing very gingerly.*) Turkish costumes! By George, if they aren't! Say! Talk about luck. (*Shoves* STEVE *and* JACK *extreme* L.) Wait a minute. (*Starts for stairs then turns.*) Now don't you go until I get back, will you?

STEVE. Swell chance of going in this comic opera regalia.

DICK (*going up-stairs*). Oh, this will be a lulu!

[*Exits.*

JACK. I wonder what he's got up his sleeve. Maybe he's gone for the cops. Let's beat it while we can.

(*Starts for window.*)

STEVE (*holding* JACK). No, it's something else, I know. We'll stick around and see.

DICK (*enters stairs followed by* RICH). Look! (*Points to* STEVE *and* JACK.) There's your harem all right.

RICH (*turns them around, examines them, etc.*). Pretty good! Pretty good! Where did you get them?

DICK. They just escaped from the pest-house.

RICH. Pest-house! This is no place for me.

(*Starts for stairs; takes out handkerchief and rubs his hands.*)

DICK. Wait a minute! There is no danger. They only happened to be in the house where the smallpox was and they were penned up as a precautionary measure.

RICH. If that's the case ——

STEVE. Sure! We're all right, aren't we, Jack?

JACK. Hope to die if we're not.

DICK. Don't you see? Here's your harem right to order. (*Points to* STEVE.) There's the Major Domo. (*Points to* JACK.) There's the favorite wife.

RICH. By Jingo! If it isn't.

STEVE. I don't know what you two fellows are talking about but if you'll let us have some clothes to get out of town we'll be glad to pay you for the use of them and return them to you as soon as we get home.

DICK. You say you are out on a vacation?

JACK. Yes, we ——

DICK. How would you like to make twenty-five dollars apiece for a couple of hours' work?

STEVE. What doing?

DICK. Nothing out of the way. You help us out and we'll furnish the clothes for you to get home. Come up to our room and we'll tell you all about it.

[*All exit by stairs.*

GERT (*enters from kitchen with tray of food*). 'Ere's all Hi could scrape up. (*Looks around.*) W'y, they're gone!

AUNT (*enters from kitchen*). What might you be doing with that tray of food?

GERT (*scared*). Well, you see, ma'am, Hi just brought it in because Hi, because Hi, just brought it in ——

AUNT. Yes, I know you just brought it in, but what for?

GERT. There was two detectives 'ere, ma'am, and they asked me for it.

AUNT. Two detectives? (GERT *nods.*) Here? (*She nods again.*) Are you crazy?

GERT. No, ma'am, hindeed Hi ain't. They was 'ere, so 'elp me, if they wasn't. They ast me for something to eat and Hi was afraid they would annihilate me hif Hi didn't get 'em something, so Hi did and you caught me and 'ere it is, ma'am. (*Offers tray to* AUNT.)

AUNT. I don't want it, you idiot! Take it to the kitchen. (GERT *starts toward kitchen.*) Wait a minute: whose letter have you in your pocket?

GERT (*hands letter to* AUNT). Hi found it, ma'am.

AUNT (*takes letter*). I suppose so. More likely you were snooping around some place. (*Reads address.*) Mr. Parker. Humph! (*Puts letter in pocket.*) Take the tray back to the kitchen and be quick about it.

GERT. Yes'm. [*Exits to kitchen.*

POLLY (*enters* C. D., *runs to* AUNT *and grabs her around the neck*). Don't let him touch me, please don't!

AUNT. Don't let who touch you?

POLLY. A man! He's been following us for a block nd oh! Look and see if Betty is all right. Hurry! Hurry! (*Shoves* AUNT *toward* C. D.)

AUNT (*bewildered*). Betty who?

POLLY. My friend, Betty King, the girl I room with. Do look, please! I—— (BETTY *appears* C. D. *brushing her hands.*) Oh, Betty! Did he——

BETTY (*enters*). No, he didn't, so don't worry. What did you run for?

POLLY. I was afraid, of course.

BETTY. Of a man? Humph!

AUNT. What does this mean? Who are you?

POLLY. I am Polly Palmer and this is my friend Betty King. We were walking along in front of your house when a man came up and spoke to us and——

BETTY. You, like a fool, ran!

POLLY. Well, what could I do?

BETTY. Slap his face like I did.

POLLY. You didn't, Betty!

BETTY (*imitating* POLLY). I did, Polly!

AUNT. You did quite right, young lady. If there were more girls in the world like you, men wouldn't be so free as to accost women on the streets as they are now.

BETTY. Oh, I don't mind being accosted if he is a half-way decent sort of a fellow. (POLLY *signals to her to keep quiet.*) But you should have seen this one. He—— (*Notices* POLLY'S *signal.*)

POLLY. Now that we are in here possibly you could give us some information, Mrs.——

AUNT. Miss, if you please. Miss Bingle.

POLLY. We are employed at the Prince Moving Picture Studio near here, at present, and were out looking for an apartment. Possibly you could direct us to a place.

AUNT. Moving pictures! I don't countenance them very much. Do you have gentlemen friends call on you?

POLLY (*smiling*). Occasionally; not very often.

AUNT. Out much at night?

POLLY. Oh, occasionally.

AUNT. Smoke cigarettes?

POLLY. Occa——

BETTY. Polly!

POLLY (*catching herself*). Oh, no, no! Of course not.

AUNT. You needn't jump at me. A lot of women do. I may be able to accommodate you. I have a few boarders and roomers and as it happens an apartment is vacant that will probably suit you. It's for two, right on this floor. Will your friend come with you?

BETTY. Yes; we want to stay together.

AUNT. You can furnish references, of course.

POLLY. Plenty. (BERT *enters from library.*) Good-evening, Bert!

BERT. Polly! What are you doing here?

POLLY. Miss Bingle has just rented us an apartment.

BETTY. Provided we don't smoke, stay out late at night, or have too many gentleman callers.

AUNT (*severely*). No joking, if you please. If you are acquainted with my nephew, you will need no other references. (*To* BERT.) I will go and air the apartment. You can bring Miss Palmer up later.

[*Exits* C. D. R.

BERT. You'll like it here, Polly. Aunt Hetty isn't half as cross as she seems.

BETTY. Anybody else here?

BERT. Mayme Clifford, cashier at the Universal City Cafeteria; Dick Girard, an Accountant with the Louperex Film Corporation, Rich Douglas, a clerk with the Santa Fé, and myself.

BETTY. Dick Girard and Rich Douglas! Do they live here?

BERT. Yes. Do you know them?

BETTY. Er, slightly.

AUNT (C. D.). Bert, will you come and help me with this window? It's stuck.

BERT. In a moment, Aunt Hetty. (AUNT *exits* C. D. R.) Coming, Polly?

POLLY. We'll let Miss Bingle air the room out first. (BERT *exits* C. D. R.) We'll like it here, I know it. The place looks so homey and comfortable.

BETTY. The place looks all right, but I'm going to be in an awful fix. (*Sits divan.*)

POLLY (*at window*). How so?

(*Lays purse on table and goes to mirror to straighten her hair, etc.*)

BETTY. Why, with Dick Girard and Rich Douglas both in the same house with me.

POLLY. Who are they? I never heard you mention them.

BETTY. I know a lot of people you have never heard me mention. I met these two at one of the movie balls at the old Auditorium and they both fell in love with me, or said they did. They sent me candy and flowers and took me to the theatre and the Lord only knows what else they didn't do, or try to, until to tell the truth I hardly knew which one of them I liked best.

POLLY (*sits beside table*). But I don't see——

BETTY. You will in a minute. As I say, they were both so nice I didn't know whether I liked Dickey Girard or Dickey Douglas the best. Both of them have Richard for a Christian name, but Girard uses Dick while Douglas uses Rich. I called them both Dickey, and that's what caused all the trouble.

POLLY. But where does the trouble come in?

BETTY. Dick Girard proposed time and time again but I always held him off just to see what Douglas would do. About two weeks ago Girard proposed again and I sent him away. Douglas came in about ten minutes later and tried to propose to me, I know he did, but he hadn't the courage, and after two or three attempts he left. In about twenty minutes I got a 'phone call and a voice came over the wire saying, "Betty, this is Dickey. Will you marry me?" I was still thinking of Douglas and I said "Yes" before I thought. The voice answered "Thank Heaven! I've got you at last" and the 'phone was hung up and for the life of me I couldn't tell whether it was Dick Girard or Rich Douglas, and I've never had the nerve to ask them for fear I ask the wrong one!

POLLY. For heaven's sake, Betty! Such a predicament to be in.

BETTY. Isn't it? I want Rich Douglas, I know it

now, but if I ask him if he proposed to me he'll think I'm a fool, whether he did or didn't, and it would be the same thing with Girard and they are both just as nice as they always were and ——

POLLY. But hasn't Mr. Girard proposed again since that day? You said he was always proposing to you.

BETTY. He proposed to me almost every day until the day I got that 'phone call, then he quit.

POLLY. Hasn't the other one said anything?

BETTY (*half crying*). I haven't even seen him since, and oh, P-P-Polly! I'm that miserable. It's awful to be engaged and not to know who to.

BERT (*enters* C. D. R.). Come on! Everything is ready. You have the nicest apartment in the house. I know you will like it. [*They exit* C. D. R.

DICK (*enters by stairs, followed by* RICH, STEVE *and* JACK). Now, whatever you do, pull it off right.

RICH. There's twenty-five dollars apiece in it for you if you do.

JACK. And ten days and costs if we don't.

STEVE. Shut up! (*To* DICK.) I'm to come here in about half an hour with Jack and ask for Bert Parker. Then give him this letter (*Shows letter.*) and tell him I come from his Uncle Daniel in Turkey, I mean from his Uncle Daniel's solicitors in Turkey.

RICH. That's the dope.

STEVE. How will I know what to say?

DICK. You'll have to use your brains. Whatever you do, though, don't get stuck.

RICH. You can say that you are his uncle's old servant, and that before he died he commissioned you to bring his favorite wife Little Bevo, Bert ought to get a kick out of that name, to his beloved nephew in America. All that kind of bunk, you know.

JACK. And I'm to be the wife?

RICH. Yes.

JACK. What will I say?

DICK. You keep your mouth shut unless you are spoken to. You're not supposed to know much English.

STEVE. But suppose I do get stuck?

DICK. You won't.

STEVE. But if he asks me about his uncle?

DICK. He's dead. Decline to talk about the dead.

RICH. Tell him it's against your religion.

DICK. Come right up to the front door and ask for the Honorable Effendi Parker. I think that's the handle they use in Turkey. I'll see that he's here for you.

RICH. Now beat it up to our room and stay there. We'll let you know when to make your entrance.

JACK. And after we make our entrance I'll bet we make our exit pretty darn quick.

STEVE. Aw! Come on and shut up. You're a regular calamity howler. [*They exit by stairs.*

RICH. I believe I'm going to enjoy this.

DICK. Say! We're a good pair of dubs!

RICH. What's the matter now?

DICK. We forgot to get the girl!

RICH. What girl?

DICK. Why Polly, of course! She's got to be here or the whole thing is kerflooey and Bert's been too darned smart to ever let us know where she lives. (POLLY *enters* C. D.) Oh, Polly, Polly, where are you?

POLLY. Right here! That is —— Were you calling me?

DICK (*shortly*). No, I wasn't.

POLLY. But I distinctly heard you. I beg your pardon though; there are evidently plenty of Pollys in the world beside myself.

RICH (*hesitatingly*). Could it be possible that you are Polly Palmer, Mr. Parker's friend?

POLLY (*smiling*). Yes, I believe I am.

DICK (*clasps hands and raises eyes*). Thank goodness! (*To* POLLY.) And you are the Polly that he has talked so much about?

POLLY (*interested*). Has he talked about me much?

RICH. Has he talked about you much? Ye gods!

DICK. You are the dream of his life, the ideal of his existence, the ——

POLLY. Oh, how interesting! I always thought he was rather quiet. And you are friends of his?

RICH. We are supposed to be.

POLLY (*takes them by the arm*). Come right over here and we'll have a nice long chat.

(*Starts toward divan as 'phone rings.*)

RICH. See who is wanted, Dick.

(DICK *goes to 'phone as* RICH *and* POLLY *sit on divan. They converse as* DICK *answers 'phone.*)

DICK. Yes, this is Hollywood 543. He isn't here just at present.....Yes, I can take a message for him. .....What's that? Say that again!.....And you mean that he gets $400,000?

RICH (*running to 'phone*). What's that about $400,000?

DICK (*paying no attention to him*). He gets all of it, provided he—three hundred pounds? (*Turns and looks at* POLLY.) No! There isn't a chance. He's already booked. No! No! No! Wait a minute; he has until seven o'clock to-morrow night? All right! I'll tell him. (*Hangs up receiver.*) $400,000! Oh, what a lump of money to be wished on you, just wished on you.

POLLY (*takes purse from table*). You have evidently received some very interesting news. We can finish our little talk later. [*Exits* C. D. R.

DICK. Could you beat it!

RICH. Well, spill it! What is it?

MAYME (*enters stairs*). Where's your harem?

DICK. Bert's picked.

MAYME. Picked what? Elucidate! Elucidate!

DICK. Picked for the Perkins fortune.

MAYME (*falls in chair*). You don't mean it! Yuh haven't been hittin' the pipe or anything like that, have uh?

DICK. No, I haven't. Bert's the lucky guy. What do you know about that?

RICH. But the paper said he had to marry a woman weighing three hundred pounds and she (*Points* C. D.) can't weigh half that much.

MAYME. There's nothin' to it. We gotta take this case in hand.

DICK. But what can *we* do? He's as stubborn as an ox and you know what he thinks of that girl.

RICH. I don't blame him at that, for she's a pippin.

MAYME (*taking both to* C. *of stage*). Look here, you two! All bets is off. We started in to play a joke on Bert but we've got to get at this thing in dead earnest. He's gotta get that $400,000 if we have to knock him down and drag him to it. We'll go right ahead with this scheme of ours, only it ain't gonna be in fun from now on. We've got to make *her* turn *him* down, for it's a cinch he won't throw her over, even if it is for $400,000.

DICK. And when she *does* throw him down, we have to marry him to three hundred pounds and *quick*.

RICH. Some job! Who knows a woman weighing three hundred pounds? Any on your visiting list, Dick?

DICK. Heavens no!

MAYME. We can't stand here and fool. We gotta act. About the first thing we'll have to do is fix things with Aunt Het, so if we pull off anything she won't queer it. She'll do anything for Bert; you know how dippy she is over him. Then the next thing is make this here Polly Jane turn him down. Does anybody know where she is or how to get to her?

RICH. She's right here in this house. Just rented an apartment from Aunt Het this evening. I was talking to her not ten minutes ago.

MAYME. Fine shootin'! That makes it easier. She ain't never seen none of Bert's friends ——

RICH. Dick and I were having a talk with her when we got the word about Bert.

MAYME. Well, you didn't spill anything, did yuh?

RICH. Did we, Dick?

DICK. Of course not; we hadn't time.

MAYME. So far, so good. (*Counts on fingers.*) Now if we fix Aunt Het, I run in on him as his divorced wife, you two line him up with the harem lady and Gert pulls off the deserted wife stunt, what more do we need?

RICH. A woman that weighs three hundred pounds; that's the most important thing of all.

MAYME. Don't worry about that; we'll get one all right. Go get Aunt Het in here and we'll fix things up with her first.

DICK (*calls at kitchen door*). Miss Bingle! May we speak to you a moment, please?

AUNT (*enters from kitchen*). What is it, Mr. Girard?

DICK. Something has turned up to-night, Miss Bingle, that is rather hard to explain.

MAYME. What's bitin' yuh? There ain't nothin' hard to explain about it. (*To* AUNT.) Bert's fell heir to $400,000.

AUNT. Land of Love! Who from?

RICH. Lydia Prudence Perkins, whoever the deuce she is, or was.

AUNT. But he's not related to the Perkinses.

MAYME (*hands* AUNT *paper and points to place*). There! Read that! Don't I wish $400,000 would drop down and biff me on the bean like that! Oh boy! What I couldn't do with it.

AUNT. But this don't mention Bert?

DICK. Finish it.

AUNT (*reading*). "And a drawing is to take place to decide which of the young men of the city is to be her heir." You don't mean to tell me that Bert's name was drawn?

DICK. That's exactly what we do mean to tell you. He gets all that money provided ——

MAYME. Yes, provided. Every time there's anything good comin' to you some old joy-chaser has to hang the crêpe on it with a "provided."

DICK. Provided he marries a woman weighing three hundred pounds before to-morrow night.

AUNT. But he doesn't know any one weighing three hundred pounds. And imagine how they would look together if he did find one.

RICH. It isn't how they would look, it's how *he* would feel if he lets that money get away from him.

MAYME. Now he's stuck on a dame ——

AUNT. He's what?

MAYME. He's in love with a young lady named Polly Palmer.

AUNT. Polly Palmer! I just rented a room to a young lady by that name.

MAYME. We know you did and it's mighty lucky for Bert you did. He's been a-ravin' and a-talkin' about this skirt for the last year—simply nuts over her. Says he's gonna marry her.

AUNT. He never said anything to me about it. Never even mentioned he knew her.

MAYME. Well, what of it? You don't expect a guy to run to his auntie every time he kisses his girl, do you?

DICK. Now we've got to break this off.

MAYME. Yea Bo! What's a girl like this here Polly dame compared to $400,000? So we're gonna get busy.

AUNT. But why should you interest yourselves in this?

DICK. Aren't we friends of his?

RICH. And as we know he won't help himself, some one has to do it for him.

MAYME. Now, we're gonna pull something off here to-night and no matter what turns up you are to keep mum.

AUNT (*offended*). Young lady! This is my house and ——

MAYME. Think of the $400,000 and Bert.

AUNT. What do you intend doing?

DICK. We are going to make Polly turn Bert down, for it's a cinch he'll never throw her over.

AUNT. No, Bert is too much of a gentleman to do that.

RICH. Neither one of them, I suppose, would listen to reason, so we have decided upon a scheme.

AUNT. I don't care to be a party to any scheme.

(*Starts toward kitchen.*)

MAYME. But think of that $400,000.

AUNT. Well, so long as there is nothing dishonest about it.

MAYME (*winks at boys*). There ain't; don't worry none. This here dame is one of these straight-laced, long-whiskered kind, that don't believe in dancin' or anything like that, so we figured up that if she thinks Bert isn't just the kind of a gink she is, she'd turn him down.

AUNT. But suppose they really love each other?

DICK. Suppose they do: Bert can marry the fat woman ——

RICH. If he can find one.

DICK (*continuing*). Get the money, divorce her, and then marry Polly.

RICH. If she'll have him second-handed.

MAYME. Say! Can't you think of something else to croak about? Of course she'll have him. What girl wouldn't if he had $400,000 to dangle in front of her?

AUNT. And just how are you going to bring all this about?

MAYME. First, we're gonna get Bert and Polly here in this room, together, when we have a nice little surprise from the Orient to spring on them and take it from me, kid, it's a peach.

AUNT. Miss Clifford! Please understand I'm not a *kid!* I dislike the word very much.

MAYME. Sorry, dearie, if I said anything to lacerate your feelin's, but you know me, Al. Anyhow, if the oriental stunt don't work, I'm gonna claim him as me divorced husband, and if that don't work we're gonna run Gert in on him as his deserted wife.

AUNT. Gert! Don't depend on her for anything. If you do, she will be sure to spoil it. Besides ——

DICK. It isn't a case of besides at all, Miss Bingle; if Bert is to get that $400,000 we can't choose the way and means of him getting it.

AUNT. Very well! I'll wash my hands of the whole affair. You can go as far as you like and do as you please without interference from me, but even to gain $400,000, I can hardly approve of your plans.

(*Starts for kitchen.*)

MAYME. Send Gert in, will yuh?

AUNT. I'll send her in but I think you are a fool to put any dependence in her help. [*Exits to kitchen.*

MAYME. Gee! I thought she'd yelp worse'n she did. Now we'll line up Gert, but we won't use her unless we have to, for brains she has nix.

RICH. But I don't think we can pull this off this way. We ——

DICK. For heaven's sake don't croak! If you can't boost, keep your mouth shut.

GERT (*enters from kitchen*). Miss Bingle said as 'ow you axed to see me.

DICK. Gert, could you tell a lie?

GERT. Huh?

DICK. Could you tell a lie, for, say, ten dollars?

GERT. For ten dollars Hi could lie like a trooper!

MAYME. Oh! The naughty little brat! Would you listen at it!

DICK. That's the way to talk! Were you ever in love?

GERT. Huh?

DICK. Were you ever in love?

GERT (*scratches head and studies a moment*). Yus, wunst! With the hiceman. Hi loved 'im for yars and yars. Took 'im out and treated 'im to hice-cream and beer and trype and sponge cyke. Many's and many's a time Hi did, but 'e wouldn't propowse, 'e wouldn't. Told me to wyte. So Hi wyted and wyted and wyted, like a blitherin' idjut and then 'e up and married the cook.

RICH. Ouch! I should hope he would marry the cook! Ice-cream and beer and tripe and sponge cake. Some combination to win a man.

DICK. If you've ever been in love you will know how to act. Mr. Parker has just fallen heir to $400,000 ——

GERT. Four hundred thousand dollars! All in wun lump?

DICK. Yes.

GERT (*grabs her forehead and staggers*). Grasp me, somebody, grasp me! Hi'm goin' to faint, Hi know

Hi am. Oh, hif it 'ad only 'appened to me; maybe Hi could 'a' got a man.

DICK (*smiling*). To get this money he has to marry a woman weighing three hundred pounds before to-morrow night.

GERT. Three hundred pounds?

DICK. Yes, three hundred pounds.

GERT (*earnestly*). Don't you ever let 'er set on 'is knee. Don't you ever let 'er do it. Lord pity 'im hif she does. The hiceman only weighed two hundred and fifty, 'e did, and wunst 'e set on mine. (*Illustrates.*) You see, Hi was a-settin' 'ere and 'e come to me, 'e did ——

MAYME. Sure! Sure! We know all about that, dearie. Now let *us* spiel a while. Mr. Parker is dead in love with a dame that I suppose don't weigh none over one hundred and ten. (*Looks at* RICH.)

RICH. About that.

MAYME. And he wouldn't throw her over for twice $400,000, so we want to bust up the combination.

GERT. Oh, Hi see! Just like Hi'd like to bust up the combination between the hiceman and the cook.

MAYME. You got me, kid, the first time. Now she won't turn him down unless she thinks she has a good cause, so we want you to represent yourself as Mr. Parker's deserted wife and ——

GERT (*startled*). 'Oo? Me?

DICK. Of course you; that's why I've been telling you all this.

GERT (*positively*). Nothing doing! Not for me. 'E'd bash me wun on the 'ead, 'e would.

(*Starts toward kitchen.*)

RICH. Wait a minute; we'll make it $25.

GERT (*shakes head*). Nope!

DICK. Thirty-five dollars.

GERT. Nope! Not for $50.

RICH. We'll make it $50.

GERT. N-n-n-nope! I'm skeered!

MAYME. Sixty dollars and that's the highest we'll go.

GERT. Would Hi 'ave to kiss 'im?

RICH. You could if you liked.

GERT. And you wouldn't let 'im bash me hif Hi did?

DICK. I should say not. There'll be no bashing going on around this house. Don't worry on that score.

GERT. Hi allus did want to kiss a man to see 'ow 'e'd tyke it.

(RICH *and* DICK *make faces and turn away from her.*)

MAYME. It's a go then.

GERT (*hesitatingly*). Hi suppose so, but Hi'm gettin' skeered already. You're sure 'e won't bash me?

DICK. I'll see that he don't. Here, Rich! You take her along and line her up as to what she is to do.

RICH (*taking her arm*). Come along, Gert!

GERT. Ho Lud! Hi'm skeered already! 'E'll call in the Bobby, Hi know 'e will.

RICH. Come on! We'll see that nothing happens to you. [*They exit by stairs.*

DICK (*to* MAYME). Now you get fixed up for his divorced wife. Polly surely won't stand for a divorce. And say! Represent yourself as a burlesque actress from one of the places down on Main Street. You can do it.

MAYME. Do it! Watch me! I'll come in as Lulu Paralyzer of the Hot Shot Burlesquers and I'll be so tough I'll squeak when I walk. You just watch Little Eva. Now I'll go and put on me glad rags and you dig up Bert and his little angel (*Walks to* C. D.) and then we'll spring the big surprise. Good Heavens! Here they come.

(*They exit stairs as* BERT *and* POLLY *enter* C. D.)

BERT. I'm mighty glad you're here with Aunt Hetty. She's a good scout and you'll like her.

POLLY. Yes, it will be nice. I have so few friends in the city. I only met Betty about a month ago but she's been lovely with me. (MAYME *and* DICK *at head of stairs.*) Oh, if I could only find my brother!

(*Sits on divan,* BERT *beside her.*)

BERT. You will, I know you will. Then you always have me, you know.

POLLY. You are sure, Bert, you never could care for another girl as you do for me?

BERT. Indeed I am! Quite sure.

POLLY. And there never was another girl in your life before I entered it?

BERT. No, never!

MAYME. Same old stuff they all peddle!

DICK. Ssssh!

BERT. Since I met you, Polly, I've been a changed man, while, as I say I have never cared for a girl before, still you have exerted a wonderful influence over me and I know you always will.

MAYME. Say! This is too good to waste a harem on it. Let me step in now; we can use the harem later.

(BERT *and* POLLY *converse.*)

DICK. But Mayme——

MAYME. Didn't you hear him say there'd never been another girl in his life before? Here's our chance. If she finds out there has, it'll be one in our favor, won't it? (*Goes down-stairs.*) Hello! Bert, old top! How's the kid?

BERT (*surprised*). Why, hello! Mayme! What's up?

MAYME. Oh, nothin' much! Was just passing along and thought I'd drop in and see you.

BERT. Passing along! What on earth are you talking about?

MAYME. Aw quit your kiddin', Bertie dear, quit your kiddin'.

POLLY (*rising*). Who is this, Bert, dear?

MAYME. "Bert, dear!" So you've fell for him, too, have yuh?

POLLY. Who are you?

MAYME. Me? Great grief! She don't know me. Why, I thought everybody did. I'm Lulu Paralyzer of the Hot Shot Burlesquers playin' down at the Follies.

BERT. Mayme, a joke is a joke, but this has gone about far enough. What do you want?

MAYME. Now, Bertie, old dear. You didn't used to talk to me like that.

POLLY. Didn't used to —— Bert, who is this?

MAYME. Ain't he never told you about his divorced wife?

POLLY (*horrified*). His—his divorced wife!

MAYME. Sure! I'm it!

BERT. Why, Mayme!

POLLY. Do you mean to tell me that you, *you* were married to *him?* (*Points to* BERT.)

MAYME (*fixing her hair*). Yep! I was his sweet cookie once upon a time.

BERT. Now cut this out, Mayme! I can stand a joke as well as any one, but this is past all endurance.

MAYME. It's a "past" all right but it was never no joke to me. When a perfectly respectable innocent girl divorces her husband to marry you and you turn her down flat after they've been married two months, it's far from being a joke, I'll tell the world.

DICK (*coming down-stairs*). Hello, Mayme! You and Bert made up?

POLLY (*to* BERT). Oh, you monster! You male vampire! And to think I trusted you. I'll never forgive you, never! Here's your ring. (*Throws ring at* BERT'S *feet.*) Good-bye! [*Exits* C. D. R.

BERT. Polly! Polly, I say! (*Picks up ring.*) Her ring! (*Sits at table.*) She's thrown me down! Now what will I do?

MAYME (*goes to* BERT *and holds her face close to his*). You might kiss your little Lulu, Bertie dear!

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The same as in* ACT I.

(*Characters should occupy same positions as those which they held at close of* ACT I.)

BERT (*speaks as though dazed*). She threw me down, and gave me back my ring!

DICK (*motions to* MAYME *and they go extreme* L., BERT *paying no attention to them*). He's taking it pretty hard.

MAYME. He'll get over it. Wait until he gets his mitts on that $400,000. I didn't think it was gonna be so easy. We can let the harem go now, can't we?

DICK. Not on your life! There might be a comeback. You take a run up-stairs. (*Starts* MAYME *toward stairs.*) I'll stay and try to hammer into his head that he really was married to you. Trot along. (MAYME *goes toward stairs, chucking* BERT *under chin as she passes him. He pays no attention to her. She exits by stairs, laughing.* DICK *slaps* BERT *on shoulder.*) Cheer up, old chap. It might be worse!

BERT. But she threw me down, she—— (*Rises.*) Why did Mayme tell that lie?

DICK. What lie?

BERT. Now don't *you* try to run anything in on me. You know what I mean; about her being my divorced wife. You know I never had a wife and of course couldn't be divorced.

DICK. How should I know? I don't believe Mayme would tell anything but the truth.

BERT (*astounded*). What! You too! Now, Dick! You know better than that. You know I never was—— m going to find her and straighten this thing out.

She'll believe me, I know she will. (*Starts* C. D., *meeting* BETTY *as she enters.*) Well! Can't you watch where you are going? [*Exits* C. D. R.

BETTY. Of all the rude, impertinent men I ever met, Bert Parker, you have them all beat.

DICK. You here, too, Betty?

BETTY. Certainly! (*Goes forward.*) I took an apartment here with Polly Palmer. That reminds me; I came to see what happened to her. She came tearing into our room a moment ago as though shot out of a gun. I asked her what was wrong and she nearly took my head off. Do you know what's the matter?

DICK (*with elaborate indifference*). N-n-no, I can't say that I do.

BETTY. Can't or won't?

DICK. Whichever you prefer.

BETTY. What's the matter with you, Dick Girard? For the last two weeks you haven't been like yourself. You've ignored me, simply ignored me, as though I had the plague. (*Pauses a moment and glances at* DICK.) You proposed to me almost every day for months and two weeks ago you quit. Why?

DICK. You didn't expect me to keep it up forever, did you? Your last answer satisfied me.

BETTY. My last answer? Dick dear, just what *was* my last answer?

DICK. As though you could forget *that!*

BETTY. Then you were perfectly satisfied with it?

DICK. Absolutely, my dear.

BETTY. Then why have you changed so lately?

DICK. Oh, I guess I met another girl. Hollywood is full of them, you know. [*Exits by stairs, smiling.*

BETTY. The mean, hateful, nasty thing!

POLLY (*enters* C. D. R.). We are going to leave this house right away, Betty King!

BETTY. Oh, are we? You may be; I'm not.

POLLY. But I can't stay, Betty, I just can't!

BETTY. Why?

POLLY. Well, just because.

BETTY. Not a very good reason, my dear. I like it

here; it's close to the studio and I haven't found out which of those two fellows I promised to marry yet.

BERT (*enters* C. D. R.). Polly! You don't believe her story about me, do you? Say you don't! Please do. (POLLY *tosses her head and turns her back to him.*) Betty! You talk to her. You tell her.

BETTY. Tell her what?

BERT. That I'm not married.

BETTY. Who said you were?

BERT. Mayme said I was married to her and divorced——

POLLY. There! You know her name, don't you?

BERT. Of course I know her name. Why shouldn't I? I've lived with her ever since I came to Los Angeles.

POLLY. Lived with her!

BERT. You know what I mean. Boarded with her, here in this house.

POLLY. All right! *Stay* with her! I'm sure *I* don't want you. [*Exits* C. D.

BETTY (*puzzled*). What's it all about?

BERT. That's what I'm trying to find out. (*Sits on divan,* BETTY *sitting beside him.*) Polly and I were engaged. We never had the date set for the wedding but she was all the world to me. Just imagine, Betty. Suppose you were all the world to somebody——

BETTY. Oh! I am! I am!

BERT. You are?

BETTY. Yes, and I don't know who to, but go on.

BERT. To-night, as you know, Polly took a room here with Aunt Hetty and I thought how nice everything was going to be and then Mayme came in and for some reason or other "busted" it, "busted" it flat.

BETTY. How?

POLLY (*enters* C. D. *dressed for street*). I am sorry to leave you, Betty, but if you won't go, I must. I am going back to Mrs. Stoneman's. If you decide to come later I will be glad to have you.

BERT (*going toward* POLLY). Polly!

(*She turns her back on him.*)

POLLY (*starts for door*). Good-night!

BETTY (*intercepting her*). Don't be a fool, Polly, just because you know how. Suppose he *was* married to this Mayme, whoever she may be. He is divorced from her, I suppose. I'll get out and you can talk things over. (*Whispers.*) Show a little bit of horse sense, at least. [*Exits* C. D.

BERT. Why, Polly, I've known Mayme Clifford for the past three years.

POLLY. Most people do know their wives.

BERT. Why won't you believe me? She never was my wife. She has simply roomed here. She has been just like a sister to me. She is a mighty good scout and I suppose this is her idea of a joke (MAYME *at head of stairs.*) but I don't get it.

POLLY. Are you telling the truth, Bert?

BERT. Of course I am.

POLLY. And you never cared for this Mayme a little bit?

BERT. Care for Mayme Clifford in comparison with you? Most certainly not!

POLLY. If you are sure?

BERT (*takes her hands*). Sure? Of course I am! (*Leads her to window.*) There's no one on the porch. Suppose we go out there and talk things over where we won't be disturbed. [*They exit window.*

(MAYME *goes to window and looks out as* GERT *appears at head of stairs.*)

GERT. Pssst! Pssst! Do Hi bust in 'ere?

MAYME (*at foot of stairs*). No, you bust *out!* Beat it!

RICH (*at top of stairs*). Here, Gert! How did you get here? Don't do anything until I tell you. Go on up to the room and stay there. (*Goes down-stairs.*)

GERT. But when do Hi bust in?

RICH. I'll tell you when to "bust" in. Now git!

GERT. Well, when Hi do bust in, you're sure 'e won't bash me?

RICH (*runs up-stairs and shoves her off*). If he don't

I will! Go back where you came from and *stay* there! (GERT *exits.*) Aunt Het was right. (*Goes down-stairs.*) That girl will run me into nervous prostration if this thing don't come to a head quick. First she wants to "bust" in; then she's "skeered" to death and wants to "bust" out.

DICK (*enters stairs*). How's things going, sister?

MAYME. They've made up.

DICK (*coming down-stairs*). No!

MAYME (*going to window*). Look!

(*All look out window.*)

DICK. I'll tell the world they have. Oh, Mama! (*They go back* C.) Now what?

MAYME. The harem lady, of course. Where is she?

DICK. Out on the back porch.

AUNT (*enters from kitchen*). Has any one seen Bert?

MAYME. I'll say we have.

RICH (*looking toward window*). You and me both.

AUNT. Please do not use such English! You know how I dislike slang. Have you seen anything of my nephew, Mr. Parker? I have a letter for him.

MAYME (*going to window*). Have a look!

AUNT (*looks out window*). Why, the bold thing! (*Short pause.*) Oh! The idea! Her head is on his shoulder!

MAYME. For the love o' mud! Where'd yuh suppose it would be?

AUNT. And he has his arm around her waist!

DICK. I wish mine was there!

AUNT (*puts hand over her eyes*). Oh! He kissed her!

RICH. Darned fool if he didn't.

AUNT (*going* C.). When he is through give him this letter.

(*Gives letter to* DICK *and exits kitchen.*)

GERT (*at head of stairs*). Now do Hi bust hin?

MAYME. }
DICK. } No!
RICH. }

[GERT *exits.*

MAYME. She'll queer this thing yet!

(*Goes to window.*)

DICK (*putting letter in pocket*). Rich, you go out and line up the harem. Have them all ready in the hall when needed and be sure no one sees you. I thought Mayme had things all fixed but evidently he has recovered from that blow.

MAYME. They're coming in!

DICK. Come on! Let's beat it! [*All exit* C. D. L.

BERT (*enters window with* POLLY). Aren't you ashamed, dear, of having doubted me?

(*They sit divan.*)

POLLY. Yes, I am; I'll admit it frankly. I don't know what could have gotten into me and I'll never do it again. I might as well confess, Bert, that one of my failings is a little trace of jealousy. I feel ashamed of it, but I just can't help it.

BERT. You can trust me, dear, never to give you any cause for being jealous of me. (STEVE *and* JACK *appear* C. D., DICK *and* RICH *behind urging them in. As* BERT *and* POLLY *turn,* DICK *and* RICH *disappear.*) What have we here? (*Goes toward* C. D.) Looks like an ad for Fatimas.

STEVE (*clears throat loudly and advances majestically toward center of stage, followed by* JACK). Is the Honorable Effendi Parker within?

(BERT L. C., POLLY L., STEVE R. C., JACK R.)

BERT. My name is Parker, but I don't know about the Effendi end of it. Who are you?

STEVE (*aside to* JACK, *who should be close behind him*). Jiminy! What is my name?

JACK (*aside, shrugs shoulders*). Search me!

STEVE (*aside to* BERT). My name? What matters a name? A Turk——

JACK (*aside*). By any other name would smell as strong.

STEVE (*aside*). Shut up! (*Aloud to* BERT.) My name is Ibriham.

BERT. All right, Ibbie, what can I do for you?

STEVE (*taking letter from bosom*). I have here a letter from the solicitor of thine uncle, the Effendi Daniel.

BERT (*taking letter*). From his solicitor? I have been looking for a letter from Uncle Dan for a long time. (*Opens and reads letter.*) Uncle Dan dead! When did he die?

STEVE (*to* JACK). When did he die?

JACK. Search me!

STEVE (*to* BERT). Er, two months ago, your excellency.

BERT. No wonder I didn't hear from him. What was the cause of his death?

JACK (*aside, pulling* STEVE'S *garment*). Let's get out of here. He's asking too many questions.

STEVE (*aside*). Shut up!

BERT (*looking up from letter*). What did you say?

STEVE. He died of—of—of —— (*Is reaching back pulling* JACK'S *clothes to have him help him; aside.*) What did he die of? What did he die of?

JACK (*aside*). Search me!

STEVE (*gives* JACK *a jab in the ribs; aside*). What did he die of?

JACK (*aside, angry*). Aw! Tell him the itch!

STEVE. He died of the itch.

POLLY
BERT } (*together*). The itch!

STEVE. Yes, Hungarian itch. The kind you scratch. (*Illustrates.*) You know.

(POLLY *and* BERT *look at each other.*)

JACK (*aside*). How could he die of the Hungarian itch and live in Turkey?

STEVE (*aside to* JACK). You shut up! (*To* BERT.) Finish the letter, Effendi.

BERT (*reads*). "You have no doubt heard of the deplorable conditions in Turkey. Your uncle lost practically all his money before his death." (*Speaks.*) No wonder he stopped sending me my $50 per. (*Reads.*)

"However, there was enough left to bury him decently. Before he died he made one request, which he stated, considering all he had tried to do for you, he knew you would not refuse honoring. He is sending you his favorite wife, asking that you keep and guard her well." (*Speaks.*) His *favorite* wife? How many had he?

STEVE. Fifty-seven, Effendi.

JACK. Yes, fifty-seven different varieties. I'm the biggest pickle in the bunch.

STEVE (*aside, kicking backward at* JACK). Shut your fool mouth!

BERT (*reads*). "He made the request that you take her into your home and care for her as your own, as a little recompense for what he had tried to do for you ever since your mother died. His last request was that if you felt you owed him anything you would be good to Little Bevo!" (*Speaks.*) Little Bevo!

JACK (*runs to* BERT; *kneels and bows his head to the floor*). Here I am, Master! (POLLY *shows anger.*)

BERT (*stepping back*). Here! Cut that out! This isn't Turkey. (*To* STEVE.) But what am I to do with her?

POLLY. Send her right back to Turkey, of course!

BERT. But, Polly dear ——

POLLY. Don't "Polly dear" me! Get rid of that awful woman. Look at her! She isn't half dressed.

JACK (*rises and goes over his clothing*). I have 'em on right, haven't I?

STEVE (*grabs him and shoves him* R., *standing between him and* BERT). Cut it out, you fool. Cut it out!

BERT. Now look here, Abie ——

STEVE (*bending very low*). Ibriham, Effendi!

BERT. All right, Ibriham. I can't keep that Turkish cigarette here.

JACK (*aside*). Did you hear what he called me? I won't stand for that.

STEVE. Hold your horse. Do you want to queer the whole thing? (*To* BERT.) It was thine uncle's express command that his beloved wife Bevo be given a home by his most beloved nephew, the Honorable Effendi Parker.

(*Bows.*) If he does not take her and care for her the jewels ——

POLLY. Jewels! What jewels?

STEVE (*turning to* POLLY *with a look of disdain*). Be silent! Woman! By the Beard of the Prophet! Didst thou belong to me I would teach thee when to speak and when to hold thy tongue.

POLLY (*aghast*). Why, why —— (*To* BERT.) Are you going to stand there and let him insult me like this?

BERT. Look here, Ibriham, you may talk to a woman like that in Turkey but we don't do it in America.

STEVE (*waves his hand as though it were a matter of no consequence*). Let it pass, let it pass. Why should we disturb ourselves over the blatting of a female?

(MAYME, RICH *and* DICK *seen at window.*)

POLLY. Female! Blatting of a female! (*Half crying.*) Bert! He called me a female and he says I b-b-blat!

BERT. Oh, for heaven's sake, Polly! Let him get through with his story. What about the jewels?

STEVE. The jewels, Effendi, are priceless. They are worth a fortune and they all go to thee, provided thou dost provide a home for this pearl of the Orient, (*Points to* JACK.) this star of the evening, this dream of delight, beside whom yon woman (*Points to* POLLY.) looks as does the cumbersome elephant when compared to the graceful gazelle!

(MAYME, RICH *and* DICK *convulsed with laughter.*)

POLLY (*gasping*). Bert! He called me an elephant. (*Cries.*) I won't stand for it, I tell you I won't.

BERT. Oh, Polly, please have a little sense.

POLLY. A little sense! You stand there and tell me to have a little sense when a man stands there and calls me an elephant right to my face. Boo-hoo! (*Cries.*)

BERT. He's only a Turk.

POLLY. I don't care what he is. He's no gentleman; neither are you or you wouldn't allow him to speak to me

like he has. I'm through with you. Through! Do you understand? Through! [*Exits* C. D. R. *crying.*

BERT (*looking after her*). About the best thing she does is get through with people.

STEVE. Pay no attention to *her,* Effendi. Why should you care? You still have Bevo.

BERT. Bevo! I don't want Bevo!

JACK (*aside*). Neither do the rest of us, but it's all we can get.

STEVE. And now, Effendi, if there is a place where we can converse in peace, I will tell thee about the jewels.

BERT. The jewels? Oh, yes. I might as well hear of them. There may be some good come of this after all. Come up to my room. [*Exits stairs.*

STEVE (*at foot of stairs*). Now you shut your face, Jack, and keep it shut and don't queer this. If you do, how are we ever going to get home?

JACK. Oh, all right! [*They exit by stairs.*

(MAYME, RICH *and* DICK *enter from window.*)

RICH. Once more she's thrown him down! It ought surely to stick this time. Now all we need is the fat woman.

MAYME. Gee! Ain't that Steve a wonderful liar! His beloved Bevo and the jewels. What did he run the jewels in for?

DICK. I suppose he had to get his story across.

RICH. But what are we going to do for them? Bert will be sure to want to see them.

GERT (*at top of stairs*). Is it me plyce to bust in?

MAYME
DICK
RICH } (*together*). No!

DICK. 'E 'as went.

GERT (*coming down-stairs*). Ho Lud! And Hi missed 'im.

RICH. You're lucky you did. He has just had another wife wished on him and he mightn't be in a very good humor. Had *you* been here he might have "bashed" you.

GERT (*clasping hands and assuming a woebegone expression*). Oh, if only some'un 'ud wish a 'usband on me. Hi would love 'im and love 'im and love 'im. Oh, 'ow Hi'd love 'im!

MAYME. You did that just like Mary Lamson, Gert, when she played in Merely Mary Ann.

RICH. You're bugs, Mayme. Comparing Aunt Het's dishwasher with the leading movie actress of America.

GERT (*eagerly*). Do Hi look like 'er? Do Hi, honest?

(DICK *stands off to one side, watching* GERT *intently.*)

RICH. By George! You do, a little.

MAYME. Go on! I didn't say she *looked* like her. I said she did that (*Assumes same position and expression as* GERT *had.*) just like her.

STEVE (*rushes down-stairs*). Get some jewels, quick! He wants to see them.

DICK. What in thunder did you say anything about jewels for? How are we going to get any?

STEVE. That isn't up to me. Get them and get them *quick.* (*Runs up-stairs and exits.*)

RICH. Now we're in a nice fix. We must have some jewels or he will catch on.

GERT. 'Ow many must you 'ave?

MAYME. It don't make any difference. The more the better.

DICK. It isn't necessary that they be real. Any old thing will do that looks like a jewel. He won't know the difference.

GERT. Diamonks and saffriars and rubyses and pearles and all them?

RICH. Sure! Any old thing just so they're jewels.

GERT. Leave it to me. Hi'll get 'em.

[*Exits to kitchen.*

RICH. Go to it. We'll leave it to you all right.

DICK. That's one thing we don't need to worry about. ('*Phone rings.*) Now what?

RICH (*at 'phone*). Yes, this is Hollywood 543.....

Mr. Parker? Just a moment. (*Puts hand over receiver.*) They want to talk to Bert.

MAYME. I'll bet a cow it's the fat woman's lawyer.

DICK. Tell them Bert isn't here and take the message.

RICH (*in 'phone*). Sorry, but Mr. Parker's out just at present.

DICK. Find out who is speaking.

RICH. Who is this speaking, please?.....Oh, yes! Just a moment. (*To* DICK.) It's Brent & Ketcher, lawyers, and they want Bert and his three hundred pounds of girl in their office at nine o'clock to-morrow *morning.*

DICK. Get their address and we'll have them there.

RICH (*in 'phone*). Your address, please..... Suite 908 Van Nuys Building. (DICK *writes address on slip of paper which he puts in pocket.*) All right. I'll tell Mr. Parker. (*Hangs up 'phone.*) Well! The executors of the Perkins will want the lucky man and his three-hundred-pound bride in their office to-morrow morning at nine o'clock. Now what?

DICK. Where, oh where, are we going to get a woman that weighs three hundred pounds?

MAYME (*starting* C. D.). I'm going to find one if I have to knock her down and drag her in by the heels.

[*Exits* C. D.

RICH (*struck with an idea*). The City Employment Agency, up on Franklin Street. We sure ought to get one there. All hired girls are fat. (*Starts* C. D.)

DICK. It won't be open at this time of night.

RICH. Then I'll try the City Jail. It's *always* open.

DICK. Just so you get somebody. I'll stick around, for it takes somebody to watch things.

(DICK *exits stairs,* RICH C. D. *Door-bell rings three times.* UNCLE *enters* C. D.; *looks around room. Lays hat on table; drums fingers on table for a moment. Looks around room again as though expecting some one to enter. Finally goes back looking at pictures, etc. Works around to window and looks out window, hidden by the curtains.*)

POLLY (*enters* C. D., *followed by* BETTY). There is no use in you talking to me this time. I am going. Luckily we haven't moved any of our things over yet.

(UNCLE *turns toward them.*)

BETTY. All right, *go!* You are making a fool of yourself just the same. It isn't his fault if the woman was wished on him. Use your brains a little bit.

POLLY. But to have that half-dressed heathen around the house all the time. I couldn't stand it.

BETTY. Not even to get the fortune in jewels which you say he gets if he takes care of the whatever-you-call-it?

POLLY. No! I looked over that Lulu Paralyzer affair. I can't say I like Miss Clifford's idea of a joke, but I can look over it, but this —— I love him, but he can't make a fool of me. (*Starts toward* C. D.)

BETTY. Dick made me acquainted with Miss Clifford and she really isn't so bad. I rather like her. Possibly if you made an effort you could learn to like Bevo. (POLLY *tosses her head.*) That is, if the jewels were thrown in.

POLLY. No! I'm done. (*Again starts* C. D.)

UNCLE (*coming from behind curtain*). Excuse an old man for meddling into your affairs, my dear, but I couldn't help hearing you. I take it from your conversation you have had some kind of a quarrel with your lover.

POLLY. Well, yes.

UNCLE. And that you are determined to break your engagement, or has it gone that far?

POLLY. Yes, it has, and ——

UNCLE. If it has gone that far, take an old man's advice and think twice before you do anything rash.

BETTY. That's just what I told her!

POLLY. *You* told me not to make a fool of myself just because I knew how. *That's* what *you* told me.

BETTY. Same thing.

UNCLE. I would like to tell you a little story, if I may?

(*Looks toward* POLLY. *She doesn't answer and he turns to* BETTY.)

BETTY. Sure! Sure! Go right ahead.

(BETTY *sits divan,* UNCLE *beside her.* POLLY *looks at them, hesitates a moment and then sits with them.*)

UNCLE (*speaking to* POLLY). When I was about your age, my dear, I was in love with a very beautiful girl, but I was jealous, very, very jealous. (BETTY *looks at* POLLY *meaningly.* POLLY *tosses her head and looks away from her.*) I loved this girl with my whole heart and soul but I was continually imagining things until I no doubt made her life miserable. One night I was working late and as I went home I walked around by her house, as lovers frequently do, very foolishly, of course, and I saw her bid a young man a very affectionate farewell on her front doorstep. I was angry, went to my room, packed my bag and left town the next morning. I didn't even have the courtesy to write and ask her for an explanation, which, of course, was not due me, although I thought it was at the time. I left the city and buried myself in an out-of-the-way, God-forsaken hole, and two years afterward, through a letter from a friend, I found that Henrietta had only been bidding a cousin, who had unexpectedly called, a fond good-bye before he left for Montana. I had made a fool of myself, ruined her life and mine, for we loved each other dearly, all because I was jealous. (POLLY *shows she is affected by the story.*) Had I only been man enough to write then and ask forgiveness, but no. I was too proud. Pride and jealousy always run together. So I stuck it out in my chosen corner of the world in silence. (*Shakes his head.*) But it taught me a lesson, my child, it taught me a lesson! Since then I have trusted those I love. Now won't you take my story to heart? Won't you think twice before you do something that may mean years of suffering to you?

POLLY (*crying*). Y-y-y-yes, I will. I thank you for

telling me and I will go and talk it over with him. (*Starts* C. D.) Bert! Bert dear! [*Exits* C. D.

BETTY. If she hadn't sense enough to thank you, I have. Bert's a good fellow and ——

UNCLE. Bert! Bert who?

BETTY. Bert Parker. The man she quarreled with.

UNCLE. Bert Parker! Is she engaged to Bert Parker? Well! Well! Well! I came all the way from Turkey just to surprise him. He's my nephew.

BETTY. I am glad you got here just when you did, for you saved her from doing something she would be sorry for. Polly is a fine girl, but jealous! Oh my! The green-eyed monster gets hold of her every time Bert looks crooked and it's about time she was getting cured.

UNCLE. I like her looks —— (AUNT *enters from kitchen, going toward stairs.*) Henrietta!

(*Goes toward* AUNT *with hands outstretched.*)

AUNT. Daniel!

(*Starts toward him, notices* BETTY *and stops.*)

BETTY. Oh, don't mind me! I'm on my way.

(*Puts hand up as screen between herself and them and exits* C. D.)

UNCLE (*as he leads* AUNT *to divan*). Can you ever forgive me for being such an idiot?

AUNT. Of course I can, although you don't deserve it.

UNCLE. I know it, but you always were an angel.

AUNT. Humph! I don't think I ever heard of an angel wearing glasses or keeping boarders.

UNCLE. You are adorable, Henrietta, boarders, nose-glasses and all.

AUNT (*musingly*). Henrietta! It has been years since I was called that, Daniel.

UNCLE. And it has been years since I was called Daniel. In Turkey they always called me Old Dan.

AUNT. Turkey! How could you stay in that hor-

rible hole where a man has as high as fifty wives? (*Looks at him sharply.*) How many wives have you Daniel?

UNCLE (*smiling*). None, none at all. I hope to have one soon, though.

AUNT. Daniel!

GERT (*enters from kitchen with paper sack containing jewels. Is all out of breath*). 'Ere they be!

(AUNT *and* UNCLE *jump up.*)

AUNT. What have you got?

GERT. Why, why, heggs for breakfast, ma'am.

AUNT. Eggs for breakfast? What are you making such a hullabaloo about the eggs for? Give them to me

(*Reaches for sack.*)

GERT (*puts sack behind her*). Oh, no, ma'am. You don't want 'em. (*Starts backing out kitchen door.*)

AUNT. Of course I want them. What are you running around with them for? Give them to me.

GERT. Please, ma'am, you don't want 'em. Hi'll put 'em in the hice-box, ma'am. You sit down, please ma'am, and they'll be put right away, ma'am.

[*Exits backward into kitchen*

AUNT (*looking after her puzzled*). There is something wrong here. She was never willing to do anything before. I'm going to see what's up.

(*Starts toward kitchen but* UNCLE *detains her. They should work in such position that their backs are toward kitchen door.*)

UNCLE. Let us finish our conversation. Let the maid attend to the eggs.

(*During next conversation* GERT *stealthily enters from kitchen and edges out* C. D. *with package.*)

AUNT. No! She is hiding something from me. I know it. It is easily seen, Daniel, you have never had to

deal with housemaids, especially of the English variety. Heaven only knows what she has in that package, but I am sure it is something she doesn't want me to see so that is just the reason why I am going to see it.

(*Starts toward kitchen.*)

UNCLE. But, Henrietta ——

AUNT. We can finish our conversation later. I simply *must* know what that girl is doing. You may come, too, if you wish. [*Exits kitchen, followed by* UNCLE.

GERT (*enters* C. D.). Where is everybody? I gotta find somebody quick!

DICK (*enters by stairs*). Have you got them?

GERT. Yes, 'ere they be. Tyke them! (*Hands bag to* DICK.) *Tyke them!* (*Forces them on* DICK.)

DICK (*takes package*). Fine, Gert! You were right on the job. (*Opens bag.*) Why, Gert! Where did you get all these so quickly?

GERT. Don't arsk me. Just take good care of 'em and give 'em back to me when you're through with 'em.

DICK. But Gert, I —— (*Looks at her closely.*) Look here, Gert. What game are *you* playing? I don't believe you are as dumb as you pretend to be. I believe you would be a mighty fine looking girl if you cleaned yourself up, put on a decent dress and combed your hair. Do you know with some good clothes you would be almost a dead ringer for Mary Lamson.

GERT (*giggling*). Aw, go on! Mr. Dick, you're just a-spoofin' me.

DICK. Holy Hat! Spoofing! No, Gert, I am not "spoofing" you. I am telling you the truth. Why do you stay here and be Aunt Het's drudge? You could do something better, I know you could.

GERT. There hain't nothin' Hi'm good for, Mr. Dick, only washin' dishes and scrubbin' floors.

DICK. By George! I have it. They say Miss Lamson is a regular angel to help people and I know she could find a place for you around her dressing-room somewhere. I'll ask her.

GERT. But she's out of the city.

DICK (*quickly*). How did you know that?

GERT (*confused*). Oh, the pypers is full of it. Lord love ye! You would think she was the Hempress of Indier or somethin' like that from the way people talk about 'er. Hi don't think she can be so much at that.

DICK. We'll have no comments on Miss Lamson, Gert. She's —— Well, she's one of the finest girls I ever saw, although I never much more than spoke to her, as she's a star while I'm only an office accountant, but I have heard of some of the wonderful things she has done.

GERT. But she's a stuck-up, painted ——

DICK. That will do! We will change the subject. We've got to get this thing we're working on brought to a climax, Gert. The Perkins lawyer wants Bert with his three-hundred-pound bride at his office in the morning. Mayme and Rich are out scouting for a three hundred pounder and one of them will be successful, I'm sure. When they get back we'll make Bert come across, but to do that we must be *sure* Polly is out of the road. She's "put" now and I hope she stays "put" until we get Bert disposed of, but if she don't I will get the two of them down here somehow and you pull off the stunt we had you lined up for. Understand, you are his wife. He deserted you and Little Billy three years ago and you have just traced him down. Tell your story good and the money is yours. Possibly we won't need you, but if we do, be ready.

GERT (*her knees trembling*). Ho Lud! Hi'm skeered. Hi know 'e'll bash me, Hi know it.

DICK (*shakes her*). Don't be foolish. He's too much of a gentleman to strike you. You go out on the porch and stay there until I call for you, and when I do, come a-running to meet your husband.

GERT. Hi'll do it for you, Mr. Dick, but 'e'll bash me, Hi know 'e will.

DICK. Oh, go along with you. (*Shoves her out window. Then takes jewels and looks for place to hide them. Finally puts them under pillow on couch and*

starts C. D. *Stops and begins searching his pockets. Mutters.*) Where in blazes did I put that address? Don't want to lose that. (*Finds letter given him by* AUNT. *Turns it over two or three times.*) Mr. Bert Parker. Humph! (*Finally looks around stage, then opens letter and reads it. Sinks on divan in daze as* BETTY *enters* C. D.) Now the fun *will* commence.

BETTY. Heard bad news, Dick?

DICK. Bad news? I should say so! (*Hands her letter, which she takes.*) Read that! No! No! You can't read it. (*Jerks letter from her.*) This is awful. (*Starts walking back and forth across stage excitedly.*) What are we going to do? He'll be sure to spill the beans. Why couldn't he have stayed in Turkey?

BETTY (*following* DICK). Why couldn't who have stayed in Turkey? What are you talking about?

DICK. Bert's Uncle Dan. Here's a letter from him. He's coming to see Bert. Says he expects to arrive on the fifteenth. That's to-day.

BETTY. Well, what of it? What's the matter with Bert's uncle? I think he is a very nice old man.

DICK. *You* think! What do you know about him?

BETTY. Not very much; I only talked to him about ten minutes.

DICK. When?

BETTY. About ten minutes ago.

DICK. Where?

BETTY. Right here.

DICK. In this room?

BETTY. Certainly in this room. What's the matter with you, Dick Girard?

DICK. Great snakes! You mean to say that he's here, *now?*

BETTY. Of course he's here. I just told you I talked to him not more than ten minutes ago. Only for him Polly would have broken her engagement to Bert. He fixed it.

DICK (*staggered*). He what?

BETTY. He fixed it up and everything's lovely again.

DICK. And *he* got Polly to go back to Bert?

BETTY. He certainly did, and I think it was real nice of him to take such an interest in a stranger.

DICK. Oh, you do, do you? Well, the meddlesome old cuss! He would be better off in Turkey, where he belongs. We had everything going good until he butted in. But now, he's here and Little Bevo's here and Ibriham's here and Bert's here, or ought to be, and the jewels are here too, and—and—and—(*Becoming confused.*) I'm through! (*Starts for stairs.*)

BETTY (*grabs his coat and pulls him back to divan*). Now sit down there, Dick Girard, and tell me what's the matter with you.

(*Seats him on divan and sits beside him.*)

DICK (*hands her newspaper*). Read that!

(*Points to paragraph.*)

BETTY (*glances over article*). Well, what of it?

DICK. Bert's the guy!

BETTY (*astonished*). You don't mean it!

DICK. I most certainly do!

BETTY. They drew his name from among all the young men in Los Angeles?

DICK. Exactly! Four hundred thousand dollars! Just think of it, Betty! And here he is so tied up with Polly Palmer that he won't even look at another girl. We made up our minds that he is going to get that money whether he wants to or not. That was why Mayme claimed him as her divorced husband.

BETTY. But I don't see how that would help any.

DICK (*impatiently*). So Polly would throw him down and leave him free to marry the fat girl. Use your brains!

BETTY. And the favorite wife from Turkey?

DICK. Some more of the scheme. And now his uncle is here ——

BETTY. That's right.

DICK. And he'll queer the whole thing just when it was going good.

STEVE (*rushes down-stairs*). The jewels! The jewels! I can't hold him much longer.

DICK. Get out of here! I'll bring them up in a minute.

STEVE. Be quick or things will go kerflooey.

[*Exits by stairs.*

DICK (*takes bag of jewels from under cushion, where he had placed it, and removes lavallier, which he shows to* BETTY, *putting bag on the divan*). What do you think of that?

BETTY (*takes lavallier and examines it closely, then looks at* DICK *suspiciously*). What is this for?

DICK. Oh, we intended using the jewels to string him along until we get him married to the fat girl.

BETTY. Where did you get this?

DICK. Gert got it some place. I suppose from some costumer.

BETTY. Who is Gert?

DICK. The hired girl here. She's helping us out.

BETTY. She never got this from a costumer. This lavallier is worth a little fortune, and I know who it belongs to.

DICK. Who?

BETTY. Mary Lamson.

DICK. Mary Lamson, the movie queen? You're crazy!

BETTY. No, I'm not, and I can prove it. I played the maid in her last picture; you remember, "The Queen's Temptation." She wore this lavallier in the coronation scene. I *know,* for I handled it many a time. Luckily I have one of her pictures in my hand-bag which shows her wearing it. Come, and I'll show you.

[*They exit* C. D. R.

AUNT (*enters from kitchen, followed by* UNCLE). You were fortunate, Daniel, you didn't have the servant question to contend with in Turkey. Servants are simply terrible since the war and almost impossible to get. Take that girl Gert, for instance: you can never depend on her or know five minutes beforehand what she is going to do next. She was to put those eggs in the ice-

box, although why she was running around with a sack of eggs at this time of night, I can't say; you saw they were not there. What could she have done with them?

UNCLE (*who has been standing near couch, picks up bag from couch where* DICK *placed it*). Here they are!

AUNT. And a pretty place for them! (*Takes bag.*) Suppose some one had sat down on them. And how did they get here, I should like to know? We both saw her take them into the kitchen. Just wait until I find her and I shall tell her a few things.

UNCLE. Don't be harsh with the girl, Henrietta. Besides, can't we sit down and have a talk? I haven't seen you for about thirty years, and it seems to me there are a lot more important things to talk about than eggs.

AUNT. Indeed! And them selling at one dollar a dozen? It is easily seen you are not running a boarding-house. As I am, I must see to it that things are prepared for breakfast. If you want to talk, come out to the kitchen. There is plenty of room there and I can hear you just as well as I can here.

(*Exits kitchen.* UNCLE *smiles and follows.*)

RICH (*enters* C. D. *and looks around room, standing near door. Tiptoes into hallway and motions off stage* L. *A very large woman enters, gorgeously dressed, wearing heavy face veil*). Now be careful! Don't say a word and stay right where I put you, and whatever you do, don't come out until I call you. You understand?

WOMAN. Yes, I understand.

RICH. I'll put you in the library. No one ever goes in there, so you will be perfectly safe until wanted. Now come on and I'll tell you exactly what to do.

[*They exit to library.*

AUNT (*enters from kitchen, very angry, with* UNCLE). Don't talk to me! Not another word, Daniel! I shall call the police. The girl is a thief. Where would she get such a collection of jewels unless she stole them?

UNCLE. But Henrietta! Why don't you ask her? Give her a chance to explain.

AUNT. You mean give her a chance to get away.

No! I shall call the police and they can deal with her. (*At 'phone.*) Main 8110.....Police Department? Send an officer to 7542 Merford Avenue, Hollywood, at once. I have secured possession of some stolen jewels and if you hurry you can probably catch the thief.

(*Hangs up 'phone.*)

UNCLE. But suppose the girl is innocent? If you would only speak to her she could probably explain how they came into her possession.

AUNT. Let her do her talking to the police.

[*Exits to kitchen.*

STEVE (*on stairs*). I simply can't hold him much longer without the jewels. He wants to see —— (*Looks around stage.*) Where's the other fellow?

UNCLE. Never mind the other fellow. What did you say about jewels?

STEVE (*at foot of stairs*). Why shouldst thou question me? By the Beard of the Prophet, if I had thee in Turkey ——

UNCLE. Turkey! What do you know about Turkey?

STEVE. What do I know about Turkey? Thou askest me, Ibriham Ben Hassam, what I know about Turkey? Who art thou to question such a personage as I? Who art thou, I ask thee?

UNCLE. My name is Daniel Easton, and ——

STEVE. Daniel Easton! You Daniel Easton?

UNCLE. Yes, I am Daniel Easton.

STEVE. Stevie, this is no place for you.

(*Holds blouse out in front, as though leading self off stage. Exits by stairs.*)

UNCLE (*looks after him a moment*). The man must be crazy. [*Exits to kitchen.*

RICH (*at library door*). Now, I've told you everything. Stay right there, do as I have told you and there's a nice little pile of money in it for you.

MAYME (*enters* C. D. L.). I couldn't get a darn thing

but a Woppess with eight little Wops and I knew he'd never stand for them.

RICH (*going to her*). Say! Wait until you see what I've got. She's a pippin! (*Draws outline of a very large woman in air with his hands.*) I think she's got about a sixty-two waist. Come on! I'll show you.

[*They exit to library.*

BERT (*enters stairs. Has* STEVE *by collar with one hand,* JACK *with the other*). Now produce the jewels. I believe you are stringing me. You say you have them? All right, where are they?

STEVE. I sent a messenger for them and he hasn't returned yet. That's what I came down-stairs for those two times.

BERT. Why in blazes couldn't you tell me that upstairs? Come on! We'll beat it back to my room before any one sees us. If they did, they would think I was starting a side-show.

JACK. But, Effendi ——

BERT. Now don't talk back, Little Buttercup. If I have to keep you I want the wherewith to do it with.

[*They exit by stairs.*

DICK (*enters* C. D. *with* BETTY). I would never have believed it. How on earth did she get them? We must have her take them back at once. (*Goes to couch and reaches for bag.*) They're gone!

(*Searches frantically for them.*)

BETTY. Gone! (*Helps him search.*) Why on earth didn't you keep them when you had them?

DICK. You startled me so when you told me who they belonged to that I walked off and forgot them, but I know I put them on the divan.

BETTY. Well, they are not here now.

GERT (*at window*). Is this me plyce to bust in?

DICK (*runs to window, followed by* BETTY. *They grab* GERT, *one on each side, and bring her front*). You bet your sweet young life this is your place to bust in. Where did you get those jewels?

GERT. 'Where did I get 'em?

DICK. Yes, where did you get them? Come across! Do you want to get us all in jail? How did you get hold of them?

GERT (*innocently*). Why, I just took them.

BETTY. She just took them! Could you beat it? She just took them!

DICK (*shaking her*). Great heavens! Girl! Don't you see the fix you are in? You are liable to be sent to jail! So am I! So's Rich! So's Mayme! They are liable to pull the house if this is found out.

GERT. Pull the 'ouse? Now wouldn't that be excitin'?

BETTY. You're talking! It would be exciting, all right, but I don't want to be here when it comes off, so I'm going to get out. (*Starts* C. D.)

DICK (*stopping her*). Betty, don't leave me in the lurch! There's nobody else here. I'm depending on you to help me.

BETTY. Nothing doing! When the police come *in, I* go out! [*Exits* C. D.

DICK. A nice pickle you've gotten us into, a nice pickle!

GERT. What's hup?

DICK. "What's hup?" Oh, nothing much! The ewels have been stolen, that's all. What in the name of common sense ever made you do such a thing, Gert? Didn't you know —— Oh, there is no use in talking; hey're gone and we've *got* to find them.

GERT. But I gyve them to you to take care of them.

DICK. I know you did and I laid them on the divan or a moment and some one took them. (*Again starts unting for jewels.*) We *must* find them, Gert, we *ust.*

GERT (*assisting him*). 'Oo do you suppose could 'a' ook 'em?

DICK. How should I know? Don't ask such fool uestions. If I knew who took them I would get after em and get them back. Get busy and don't talk so uch. You got me into this mess by swiping the wels ——

GERT. But Hi didn't swipe 'em.

DICK. Who else did? You didn't take them away any place, did you?

GERT. Hi gyve 'em to you and Hi ain't seen 'em sincet.

DICK (*studies a moment*). I wonder if those two galoots up-stairs got their hooks on them. I'll bet *that's* where they are. I'll go up and see. You take a look around the porch. Hurry!

[*Exits by stairs,* GERT *at window.*

POLLY (*enters* C. D., *looks around room a moment, then goes part way up-stairs and calls, softly*). Bert! (*Pause.*) Bert!

BERT (*at top of stairs*). You keep your eye on them, Dick, until I get back. (*Comes down-stairs.*) Polly! You've forgiven me, haven't you?

POLLY. It's you that should forgive me. I permitted my jealousy to get the better of me again. I do trust and believe in you, Bert, and when we get married I'll be the best little wife ——

BERT. Get married! Let's do it now. Let's elope!

POLLY. Oh, Bert! That's just what we'll do.

BERT. You go and get your coat and hat and when you come back I'll be right here waiting for you. Don't be long, for it will only take me a minute to get my coat and hat. We'll scoot down to Santa Anna, get married and be happy ever after.

POLLY (*at* C. D.). Bert, you're a dear!

BERT. I've always known it.

(POLLY *exits* C. D. R. *and* BERT *starts up-stairs whistling.*)

AUNT (*at kitchen door with* UNCLE). Bert! Come here a moment. (BERT *goes down-stairs unwillingly.*) I have the biggest surprise for you.

BERT. Surprise? I'll bet it's nothing to the one I am going to hand you.

AUNT. Oh, yours can't possibly equal mine. When did you hear from your Uncle Dan last?

BERT. Uncle Dan? Oh, not very long ago. Had some mighty good news, too. He's dead.

UNCLE (*amazed*). What!

BERT. Yep. Died two months ago and left me a little fortune in jewels provided I take care of his favorite wife, Little Bevo. He sent her to me and she's some swell little teaser, I'll tell you. She just arrived. She's up-stairs now.

AUNT. Up-stairs? Now?

BERT. Sure! And say, Aunt Hetty, she's a dream. Cutest little trick you ever saw, although what in the name of the Lord I am going to do with her, I don't know. Wait! I'll show you. (*Goes to foot of stairs and calls.*) Hey! Ibbie! Shoot a little Bevo down this way. (*Returns* C.)

AUNT (*to* UNCLE). So! I suppose a man is never too old to be found out. I might have known you couldn't live all these years in Turkey without being contaminated. Your favorite wife! How many more have you?

UNCLE (*pleading*). None, Henrietta. This is all a mistake. I can ——

AUNT. Leave my house! That's the best thing you can do.

BERT. What's all the row? (*To* AUNT *confidentially.*) Who's the old bird? (JACK *enters stairs.*) Ah! Here she is! Here's my little Pearl of the Orient. Some pippin, isn't she?

(*Turns* JACK *around for inspection.*)

AUNT. Pearl of the Orient! (*To* UNCLE.) You deceiver! And to think I trusted you. This is the second time you have failed me. I'll never trust you again, never! [*Exits to kitchen.*

UNCLE (*to* BERT). This is all your fault, you young ackanapes! And after all I have done for you, too. 'll attend to you later. [*Exits to kitchen.*

BERT. I don't know what's the matter with the old uy, but I'm too happy to care. I'll tell you something,

Bevo. In about one hour and thirty minutes I am going to be the happiest young man in Southern California. Do you know why?

(DICK *at head of stairs.*)

JACK. No, Effendi.

BERT. No? Well, I'll tell you. Because in another hour and a half the sweetest little girl in Southern California is going to be Mrs. Bert Parker, do you see? So if you are a good little Turk I'll let you dance at my wedding. That is if you know how to do any of the American dances. Do you?

(DICK *has edged down-stairs to* C. D.)

JACK. A little, Effendi.

BERT. A little? That will never do. Here, I'll show you. (*They start to dance the one-step and* DICK *slips out window.*) My! You are heavy on your feet. Feels like dragging around a ton of brick. Put a little pep into it, a little ginger. (*Dances a moment.*) There! That's better.

(*They dance to extreme* L. *of stage, away from window.*)

DICK (*in window, with* GERT). Polly's coming up the hall. Now's your chance to pull off your stunt. Go to it! (*Is shoving her into room,* GERT *holding back.*)

GERT. But the jewels?

DICK. They can wait. Hustle!

(*Shoves her inside room, as* POLLY *appears* C. D. POLLY *stops in* C. D., *horrified at seeing* BERT *dancing with* BEVO. DICK *remains in window.*)

GERT (*crossing stage and throwing arms around* BERT'S *neck*). 'Eart of me 'eart! 'Ave Hi found you at last!

BERT (*amused*). Why all the mush, Gert?

GERT (*removing arms*). Mush 'e calls it! Mush! Hi

calls it tragedy, Hi does. Hi comes in 'ere and finds me 'usband dancin' with that shameless creature (POLLY *gasps at word husband.*) and when in the face of hit Hi 'ugs 'im 'e calls it mush. (*Cries.*) Oh, 'usband dear ——

BERT. Another one! It seems I have wives to burn to-night. Now look here, Gert, I ——

GERT. Don't you go a-perjurin' of yourself and say you don't know me. Oh, 'usband dear! Me 'eart's jest a-floppin' around hinside me chest like Jonar in the whale's belly, for love of you. (*Again throws arms around* BERT.) And you ain't forgot Little Billy, 'ave you?

POLLY (*going front*). Little Billy!

DICK (*aside*). Great!

BERT (*crosses to* POLLY, GERT *hanging to him, while* DICK *steps outside where he can remain unseen*). For heaven's sake, Polly, pay no attention to Gert. I don't know what's gotten over her that she should act like this.

POLLY (*crying*). And you know *her,* too! Oh, this is too much, too much! (*Cries.*)

BERT (*trying to unloosen* GERT'S *arms*). Gert, for heaven's sake ——

GERT. Oh, Hi'm goin' to 'old you for ever and ever.

DICK (*solemnly*). Amen!

POLLY. Oh, you are? (*Tries to jerk* GERT *away from* BERT.) Let go! You shameless woman! Let go!

GERT. Shameless? 'E's me 'usband, ain't 'e? Now Hi 'ave 'im where Hi can stick, Hi sticks, Hi does.

POLLY (*going toward* C. D.). And I believed you this time. To think that I was going away with you, too. I suppose I should be thankful that she found you when she did, if for nothing else but for the sake of L-L-L-L-Little B-B-B-B-Billy!

BERT. Oh, Polly, listen to me. I have no Little Billy or Little Tommy or Little Johnny or ——

POLLY. No, this has taught me a lesson. I'm through with you this time, through. Here's your ring. (*Takes* BERT'*s hand and puts ring in it.*) All I ask is that you be good to Little B-B-Billy!

(*Cries loudly and rushes out* C. D. R.)

BERT (*throws* GERT *aside*). It has taught you a lesson, has it? (*Looks out* C. D. R.) Well, if it has taught *you* one, it has also taught *me* one. This is the second time you've told me you were through with me and by George, you won't have an opportunity to tell me so the third time. I've loved that girl, Gert, for over a year, and she's kept me in hot water all the time through her jealousy. This time I'll teach her a lesson. I don't know why you did this, but I am thankful you did, for I was going to marry her, Gert, marry her. And imagine being tied up to some one that couldn't trust you.

(*Sits divan stunned.*)

GERT (*edges toward window as* DICK *enters through window*). Now what'll Hi do?

DICK. Beat it out on the porch and see if you can find the jewels. (GERT *exits window while* DICK *crosses to* BERT *and slaps him on shoulder.*) What's the matter now?

BERT (*without raising head*). Oh, she's thrown me down again and given me back my ring.

(RICH *and* MAYME *at library door.*)

DICK. Don't take it so hard, old chap, she'll come around.

BERT (*jumping up*). She won't have the chance! This was just once too often. I'm going to start out, Dick, and I'm going to marry the first girl I meet that will have me.

RICH (*coming forward*). Now you're talking! You just wait a minute. I have the very one you want. She's good looking and there's lots of her.

(*Starts toward library.*)

BERT. Bring her along. I'll teach that girl a lesson she'll remember this time.

RICH. That's the way to talk. (*Motions off stage at*

library door. WOMAN *enters and stands* R. C.) There she is! What do you think of her?

BERT. Gee whiz! I said girl, not girls. There's enough of her to make a young ladies' seminary. (*Walks around* WOMAN *looking at her.*) Let's have a look at your face. (*Throws up* WOMAN'S *veil, disclosing negress.*) Good-night!

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE.—*Same scene as in close of last* ACT; *one minute later.*

(RICH *at window with* BERT'S *coat in his hands.* DICK *and* MAYME *standing* C.)

DICK. Why didn't you grab him?

RICH. I did.

DICK. Well, then, why didn't you hold him?

RICH. How could I when he wiggled right out of his coat?

MAYME. Humph! It's a wonder he didn't wiggle out of everything he had on when you tried to stop him for that three hundred pounds of blackness to get her hands on him. He sure went out of that window in a hurry and didn't she sail after him? Oh boy!

DICK (*disgusted*). That was a nice stunt to pull off, wasn't it?

RICH (*coming forward*). How was I to know she was black?

MAYME. Yuh still got your eyes, ain't yuh?

RICH. Of course I have but I didn't look at her. She had that confounded veil down all the time. You see I went up to the city jail and asked the desk sergeant if he had any fat ones and he towed her out.

DICK. What was she in for?

RICH. Assault and battery or something like that. As soon as I saw her I knew she was the one I wanted, so ——

DICK. A negress?

RICH. But I didn't know she was a negress. She had her veil down, I tell you. So I paid her fine and asked her if she wanted to make $25 and she ——

DICK. But that has nothing to do with you bringing ——

RICH. Now wait a minute. Then I explained to her what we wanted and I was so busy talking to her that I never thought of asking her to raise her veil, so you see —— (*Shrugs his shoulders.*)

MAYME. Of all the boneheads I ever met, Rich Douglas, you take the tin medal. Now the question is, how are we gonna get him back?

DICK. Go after him, of course. (*To* RICH.) Now you trot right out of that window and don't come back here without him. (*Shoves* RICH *toward window.*) Beat it!

RICH. Why pick on me? I just got in. Why don't *you* go?

DICK. Because I have other things to do here. Trot on!

RICH (*grumbling*). Oh, I'll go, but I never dreamed helping a friend into $400,000 would be such a job as this. [*Exits window with* BERT'S *coat.*

DICK. Now we have to figure out some kind of a plan ——

RICH (*rushes in window, closing it behind him*). There's a policeman out there coming up the walk. I saw him when I was down at Central Station a little bit ago.

DICK. The jewels!

RICH. Why should he be after the jewels?

DICK. I haven't time to explain now. We've got to find Gert. Come on.

(*Grabs* MAYME *and* RICH *by the arm and starts to window.*)

RICH (*holding back*). No, no! Not that way. He'll see us.

DICK. Then this way. (*Starts* C. D.)

MAYME. And meet him comin' in.

DICK. Then up-stairs. Come on.

(*Starts for stairs.*)

RICH. How in blazes can I go out after Bert if we go up-stairs?

DICK. You can slide down the back porch roof.

RICH. And break my blooming neck.

DICK. Not if you're careful. [*They exit by stairs.*

GERT (*enters window*). They ain't there, so 'elp me hif they are. Hi've 'unted and 'unted and 'unted and —— (*Stops and looks around stage.*) Ho! Mr. Girard! Where you be 'idin' yourself? (*Goes to* C. D. *and meets* INSPECTOR *entering.*) 'Oo be you?

INSPECTOR. I'm Inspector Clancy from Central Station. There was a call from this house about a half hour ago to send a policeman up right away.

GERT. A policeman?

INSPECTOR. Yes, a policeman.

GERT. To *this* 'ouse?

INSPECTOR (*angrily*). Yes, to this house.

GERT. Right awye?

INSPECTOR (*very angry*). Yes! Right away!

GERT. This is no plyce for me!

(*Rushes into library, shuts and locks door after her.*)

INSPECTOR (*at library door, shaking knob*). Here! Here! What's up? (*Pause.*) Why don't you answer me? (*Pause.*) What's the meaning of this? (*Listens a moment and then tries to peep through keyhole.* STEVE *and* JACK *come down-stairs, wearing long overcoats, their Turkish costume showing beneath the coat. They notice* INSPECTOR *at library door and tiptoe toward* C. D. *Just as they reach the door* INSPECTOR *rises and sees them.*) Say! (*They stop suddenly and turn facing* INSPECTOR, JACK *hiding behind* STEVE *and stooping so his overcoat touches the floor.*) What's going on here?

STEVE. Why, why, what's the matter?

INSPECTOR. There was a 'phone call from this house about a half hour ago asking that a policeman be sent here.

JACK. A policeman!

(*Gathers overcoat up around his waist and runs upstairs,* INSPECTOR *looking after him in amazement.*)

INSPECTOR (*rubs his eyes and looks up the stairs*). Did I see that or didn't I? (*Points up-stairs.*)

STEVE. See what?

INSPECTOR. Say! What's the matter around this joint anyway? I just saw the servant girl and when I told her I was a policeman she ran in there and locked herself in, (*Points toward library.*) and now *that* —— What's wrong around this place anyway?

STEVE. How should I know?

INSPECTOR. Well! What do you want a policeman for?

STEVE. Now really, Chief ——

INSPECTOR (*swells up importantly*). Um hum!

STEVE (*noticing the impression he has made*). Not having made the call to which you refer, I of course can't say just what is wrong.

INSPECTOR. What was the matter with that, er, well that that just scooted up-stairs in the abbreviated pantalets?

STEVE (*in matter-of-fact tone*). Nothing, nothing at all! We were just going out to a masquerade and the lady, of course, didn't want to be seen.

INSPECTOR. *Lady!* Is that what it was? (*Goes to foot of stairs and looks up stairs.*) But why did that servant girl go and lock herself in as she did? You would think she had done something crooked by the way she beat it into that room. (*Crosses to library and tries door which he now finds open.*) That's funny! I'm sure I tried that door and found it locked. (*Exits into library.* STEVE *goes to door, cautiously reaches around for key, locks door on stage side and then starts for stairs. When he is about* C. *of stage* INSPECTOR *begins shaking door.*) Here! Let me out of this! What did you lock me in for? Let me out, I tell you. (*Is shaking door violently.*) I'm Inspector Clancy of Central Station. I'll make it hot for somebody if you don't.

(*Shakes door.*)

DICK (*comes down-stairs*). What's up now?

STEVE. The servant girl is in there with a policeman.

(INSPECTOR *shakes door and calls: "Let me out, I tell you, let me out."*)

DICK. Worse and more of it. What's she doing in there?

STEVE. I don't know. I'm giving you what he told me. (*Points to library.*)

DICK (*goes to library door to listen.* INSPECTOR *shakes door violently and calls: "Are you going to let me out? I'm Inspector Clancy, and I tell you I'll make it hot for somebody."* DICK *jumps away from door as* INSPECTOR *begins to shake it*). He'll have the whole neighborhood out if he keeps that up. (*Notices* STEVE'S *overcoat.*) What are you doing with my overcoat?

STEVE. Well, you see Jack and I borrowed a couple of coats we—er, found up-stairs. We decided to make our getaway.

DICK. I don't blame you. I would myself if I could.

STEVE. And we bumped into the cop right here. It seems he had already run into Gert and she ran in there and locked the door.

DICK. Bully for Gert!

STEVE. The cop tried to find out what he was wanted here for and when I couldn't give him any information he tried the door again and found it unlocked. He went in and I locked him in. Now, you just hold him here long enough, please, until Jack and I get away. We didn't have the smallpox. All we did was sleep in a hotel with a fellow that did.

DICK. Man, he's after bigger fry than two fellows that escaped from the pest-house. In some way, I can't say just how, Mary Lamson's jewels got into this house and now they have disappeared. *That's* what he's after.

STEVE. Mary Lamson, the movie queen?

DICK. Yes, Mary Lamson the movie queen. Gert got her jewels somehow and brought them here in a sack, just like you would two-bits worth of spuds, and them worth a hundred thousand or so. That's what we get for you running that jewel business in. I had them a moment, laid them on the divan, and now they're gone.

(*Loud noise in library.*)

AUNT (*enters from kitchen*). What *is* that noise? That is the second or third time I've heard it.

DICK. Well, you see, Miss Bingle, that is, er ——

(*Motions for* STEVE *to help him out.*)

STEVE. It's this way, Mrs. ——

AUNT. Who are you?

STEVE (*to* DICK). What will I tell her?

AUNT. Can't you answer me?

STEVE. You see, Mrs. ——— (*Loud noise in library.*)

AUNT (*starts toward library*). What on earth is the matter in there? (*Scream from kitchen, followed by loud noise.*) Great heavens! Now it's over there. What *is* wrong?

DICK (*leading* AUNT *toward kitchen*). If I were you, Miss Bingle, I would go right out and see. Just go right out this way and see what it's all about. (*She exits kitchen.* DICK *shakes fist in direction of kitchen.*) Oh, you nut! And I told you to come down easy. I wonder what he fell into? (*Noise in library.*) Now to shut this guy up.

(*Starts toward library.*)

BETTY (*at* C. D., *dressed for street*). What's the racket and who was screaming?

DICK. Where are you going?

BETTY. I am going to get out before the police get in.

DICK. You are too late. They are here now.

BETTY (*looking around room*). Where?

DICK (*points toward library*). He's locked in there.

BETTY. Good heavens! (*Goes to window.*) Have they got the house surrounded?

DICK. I don't think as yet. There's only one here that I know of, but the Lord only knows what he is liable to do before we're through with him.

BETTY. Oh, this is terrible! What can we do?

STEVE. Jack said we would get in Dutch on this job.

DICK. By George! I have an idea. That paper says Bert must marry a woman weighing three hundred pounds, don't it? (*Hunts for paper.*)

BETTY. What if it does, that won't help us any.

DICK. Help us find the paper and I'll show you.

(*All hunt for paper,* STEVE *finding it.*)

STEVE. Is this what you are hunting?

DICK (*grabbing it*). Let me see it. (*Sits divan,* BETTY *and* STEVE *on either side of him.*) Yes, I'm right. "Must marry a woman weighing three hundred pounds before the week is out." Now then: suppose he married her when she weighed three hundred pounds and she reduces immediately after.

BETTY. What in the name of common sense are you talking about?

DICK. It's like this: Suppose Bert marries the girl he wants ——

BETTY. In other words, Polly Palmer.

DICK. Yes, Polly Palmer, *when* she weighs three hundred pounds.

BETTY (*rises and looks down at* DICK). *When* she weighs three hundred pounds. But she don't. She only weighs one hundred and twelve. I think the sight of that policeman has affected your head. (*Starts* C. D.)

DICK (*following her*). Wait a minute, Betty. (BETTY *turns.*) If Polly was fixed up to weigh three hundred pounds *when* she was married, she would be a three-hundred-pound bride, wouldn't she?

BETTY. Yes, but it wouldn't be honest.

STEVE. It's as honest as the rest of the scheme and I believe it could be done, and we've got to do something to get ourselves out of this fix we're in.

BETTY. Are you having pipe dreams, too?

DICK. It's like he says; we've got to do something or we'll be implicated in this jewel robbery. Don't you see, Betty, if he married her and got the $400,000 he could reimburse Miss Lamson for the loss of her jewels and still be about $300,000 ahead, and besides have the girl he wants.

BETTY. But how will we get rid of the police?

DICK. We'll think of a way later. Do you think Polly will go through with it?

BETTY. We can try her.

(DICK *and* BETTY *start* C. D.)

STEVE. But what will we do with the cop?

(*Loud noise in library.*)

DICK. Jumping ginger! He'll have the militia out next if he don't stop that.

STEVE. Couldn't we get him up-stairs somehow and tie him up until after the ceremony?

BETTY. How could we get him up?

MAYME (*enters stairs*). She ain't up-stairs, that's a cinch. I was clear to the attic.

DICK. Who isn't up-stairs?

MAYME. Why, Gert. Didn't you send me to hunt her?

DICK. Oh, never mind Gert. She's safe. Come here. (MAYME *goes front.*) We've got a policeman locked in there. (*Points to library.*) He's after the jewels.

MAYME. But why is he after the jewels?

DICK. Gert swiped them, that's why.

MAYME. The little devil! I didn't think it was in her. But suppose she did. They ain't real, are they?

BETTY. Oh no! They're only worth about $100,000 and she stole them from Mary Lamson, the movie star.

MAYME. God save Ireland! Now we *are* in for it.

DICK. And now the police have got wind of it and there's one of them locked in the library. Now we're going to try to get Polly to make up to weigh three hundred pounds, marry Bert, get the money ——

MAYME. But the jewels, what about them?

DICK (*continuing*). Replace the jewels, choke off the police, and still have $300,000 or so to the good. He's got to do something. It was for his sake we got into this mess. (RICH *enters* C. D.) Oh! Here you are! You came down nice and easy, didn't you?

RICH. Well, I couldn't help it. I got my foot caught in the clothes-line and fell into the wash-boiler, and say, I can't find him. I've been every place I could think of and I can't locate him.

DICK (*shoves* RICH *toward window*). Keep after him. You *must* find him or we all go to jail.

RICH. But say, Dick——

DICK. You've got to, that's all. Now mosey on. (RICH *exits window.*) Now, Mayme, we're going up-stairs and will leave the field to you. As soon as we get up-stairs, you get his nibs over there out and give him any kind of a cock and bull story you want, but get him up to my room. We'll do the rest.

MAYME. Yuh ain't got a grudge against me or anything, have yuh?

DICK (*at foot of stairs*). Don't talk, *act!*

[*Exits stairs with* BETTY.

STEVE (*at foot of stairs*). Call him Chief and he'll eat out of your hand. [*Exits by stairs.*

MAYME (*goes to library door and listens, studies a moment, then unlocks door and runs to middle of room, turning to face door. As* INSPECTOR *enters, puts up finger warningly*). Ssssh!

INSPECTOR (*loudly*). What's the meaning of all this? What's the meaning of it, I say?

MAYME (*very mysteriously*). Ssssh! Not a word! Not a sound! They're desperit. They're up-stairs, the whole gang of 'em. You come with me and I'll show you how you can get all of 'em.

INSPECTOR (*impressed*). What's wrong with this house anyway?

MAYME. Not so loud! Not so loud!

INSPECTOR (*impressed*). But there's something crooked going on here and——

MAYME. I know it. Sssssh! Not a word, Chief! Not a word! (INSPECTOR *straightens up proudly.*) Just you follow me and we'll land 'em. (*Goes to library door and listens a moment, putting finger up for silence.* INSPECTOR *follows her.*) Ssssh! (*Tiptoes across stage to kitchen door and does the same,* INSPECTOR *following*

her.) Ssssh! (*Same thing at* C. D.) Ssssh! (*Start up-stairs. Half-way up stop.*) Ssssh!

[*They exit by stairs.*

AUNT (*enters quietly from kitchen, pausing a moment inside door to listen. Crosses to library door, opens it quickly and* GERT *falls out on stage. Dress should be torn, face and hands blackened, hair partially down, etc.*). I knew there was something in there they didn't want me to see, but I didn't think it was you. How did you get so dirty?

GERT (*rising*). Hi was hup the flue, ma'am.

AUNT. Up the flue! What took you up the flue?

GERT. Well, you see, Miss Bingle, Hi run in there —— (*Points toward library, and stops.*)

AUNT. What for?

GERT. Well, ma'am, because 'e, because 'e, because 'e ——

AUNT (*shaking her*). Because he what? For mercy's sake, speak out!

GERT. Because 'e was hafter me, ma'am.

AUNT. Who was after you?

GERT. The man, ma'am.

AUNT. What man?

GERT. The man as was hafter me, ma'am.

AUNT (*exasperated*). But what was he after you *for?*

GERT. Because Hi run, ma'am.

AUNT. Why did you run?

GERT. Because 'e took hafter me, ma'am.

AUNT (*thoroughly angry*). Oh, you idiot! you blockhead! If I ever wanted to manhandle any one in my life it is you this minute. (*Grabs* GERT's *arm.*) You come with me and get cleaned up and then I have a bone to pick with you, young lady, about those "heggs" you brought for breakfast. (*Start toward kitchen.*)

UNCLE (*enters kitchen*). Don't be harsh with the poor girl, Henrietta. Perhaps she can explain things to your satisfaction, if given the opportunity.

AUNT (*glaring at him*). Perhaps! Possibly as well as you have explained about your *wife* up-stairs.

[*Exits to kitchen with* GERT.

UNCLE (*stands and looks after them a moment, shaking his head.* JACK, *still in long overcoat, tiptoes downstairs and starts for* C. D. *Just as he reaches door,* UNCLE *sees him*). Here, you! I want to speak to you a moment. (*Starts for* JACK, *who looks hurriedly around room and then bolts for library, enters and locks door, or holds it from inside.*) Open the door! (*Pause.*) Open the door, I say. All I want is to ask you a few questions. (*Pause.*) Come! Come! I want a little talk with you; open the door.

JACK (*opens door and sticks head out*). What does the Effendi desire?

UNCLE (*walking* C.). Come on out and I'll tell you. (JACK *comes on stage.*) You say you are the favorite wife of Daniel Easton?

JACK. Yes, Effendi.

UNCLE. What's the game? My name is Daniel Easton and I am quite sure I never sent a favorite wife or any other kind of a wife to my nephew to be cared for. There is something going on here that shouldn't be and somebody is lying. Who is it?

JACK. Why should the Effendi ask Little Bevo? I was sent from my home in far-off Turkey to a man named Parker to be cared for, and that is all I can tell thee.

UNCLE. Who sent you?

JACK. My husband, the Effendi Daniel.

UNCLE. But I am the Effendi Daniel, if you want to call me that, and I am sure I never was your husband.

JACK. Oh, Effendi! I know not the ins and outs of the case. Just think of me, a poor little girl all alone in a strange country. What shall I do? Oh, what shall I do? (*Throws himself on* UNCLE'S *breast and sobs.*)

UNCLE. Here, here, here! Suppose some one should come in.

(*Tries to get away from* JACK *but is unsuccessful.*)

AUNT (*enters from kitchen; stops just inside door*). Um-hum! You had no wife, hadn't you?

UNCLE (*very angry, throws* JACK *on divan*). We'll have no more of this!

JACK. Oh, Effendi! Why act like you did in far-off Turkey? This is America.

UNCLE. That's enough, I said! You take a run up-stairs. (*Points toward stairs.* JACK *looks at him a moment and then exits stairs.*) And now *you* (*To* AUNT.) are going to listen to some plain speaking.

AUNT. Oh! Am I? (*Turns to go out.*)

UNCLE (*grabs her arm*). Yes, you *are*. (*Leads her to divan.*) Sit down! (AUNT *glares at him defiantly.*) Sit *down!* (*She sits.*) That's better. Now we can talk things over. (*Sits beside her.*) Now I'll agree that I made a fool of myself years ago but I am not going to be made a fool of now. While I have lived in Turkey for twenty odd years ——

AUNT. I don't care where you have lived. I have no intention of listening to you any longer.

(*Attempts to rise,* UNCLE *preventing her.*)

UNCLE. Oh, yes, you have! I have just got started. As I say, while I have lived in Turkey for twenty odd years, the Turkey that I have been in does not permit a man to have more than one wife. Now as I intend marrying you ——

AUNT. The very idea! I'll never marry you. Never! Never! Never!

UNCLE. Oh, yes, you will! As I say, as I intend marrying *you,* it stands to reason that that ding-bat that just went up-stairs is not my wife and I can assure you she never was. That being the case, we'll go out, get a license, and do things up to-night. I have to start back to Turkey to-morrow.

AUNT. And do you think for a moment that even though I did intend to marry you, which I don't, I would be in such a hurry? I wouldn't marry the King of England like this.

UNCLE. I believe he has a wife so you needn't worry on that question. It's me you are considering now. (*Pleading.*) Henrietta! We've lost the past twenty-five

years through my foolishness. Don't let us lose the next twenty-five through yours.

AUNT. Oh, Daniel, I believe you. But I couldn't live in Turkey.

UNCLE. We'll talk about that later.

AUNT. And I couldn't marry you to-night. I would need a whole new outfit of clothes and ——

UNCLE. I'll outfit you all in the new. I don't like that old-maidish way of dressing anyway. It doesn't do you justice, my dear. You might as well have everything that is coming to you, for you are marrying a rich man. Are there any stores open?

AUNT. Of course not. At this time of night! Daniel! I have my old wedding dress in my trunk. The dress I bought when you ——

UNCLE. Put it on!

AUNT. At this time of night? People would think I was crazy.

UNCLE. Never mind what people think; you are pleasing me, now. Come on.

(*Takes her hand and starts toward dining-room.*)

AUNT. Really, Daniel, I don't like to do this.

UNCLE. Why not? Can't you trust me?

AUNT. Yes, Daniel. [*They exit dining-room.*

POLLY (*enters from stairs, crossing to extreme* L., BETTY, DICK *and* MAYME *following*). No! No!! No!! (*Stamps foot.*) I won't do it.

BETTY. But, Polly ——

POLLY. I won't, I tell you, and that settles it.

DICK. But, Miss Palmer ——

POLLY. Under no conditions!

BETTY. Don't be a fool, Polly, because you know how.

POLLY. That's about the third time to-night you have told me that.

BETTY. It stands to reason then that you are in need of a little friendly advice. Now in this case ——

POLLY. I won't listen.

(*Turns and walks back stage,* DICK *and* BETTY *following.* MAYME *stands* R.)

DICK. You *must* help us out. We are in an awful fix and ——

POLLY (*turning toward him quickly*). Did *I* have anything to do with getting you into this fix?

DICK. No, but it was gone into partially for your sake.

POLLY. Partially? I can handle my own affairs, thank you. (*Goes front.*)

BETTY. Now that the jewels are gone they must be replaced and ——

POLLY. Did I bring them here? Why should you hold *me* responsible for them? I think it was a ridiculous, presumptuous arrangement from the start and I'll never forgive any of you, never! (*Starts toward* C. D.)

MAYME (*stops her*). Say! Put on the soft pedal and go back and sit on a tack. (*Shoves* POLLY *backward and makes her sit on divan.*) Do you know what you need? You ought to be turned over somebody's knee and a No. 10 applied where it would do the most service.

POLLY (*aghast*). Oh, you impertinent, brazen, bold ——

(*Attempts to rise.* MAYME *shoves her back on divan.*)

MAYME. Go ahead! Enjoy yourself! You ain't worryin' me none, though, so you might as well lay off. I'm gonna have my say out and you're gonna listen to it, so you might as well make up your mind to it. (*Sits divan beside* POLLY.) Now about the first thing you want to get into your head, dearie, is that you ain't the whole cheese.

POLLY. I won't stay here to be insulted.

(*Rises and* MAYME *pulls her back on divan.*)

MAYME. The Lord said unto Pat! Would yuh listen

at it! Who's insultin' of yuh? I ain't. I was just tellin' yuh the gospel truth. Now listen: When this here fat dame shuffled off and left this pile of mazuma to some guy provided he married a girl weighin' three hundred pounds and we found Bert had been picked as the goat, we, bein' friends of his, made up our minds that he was goin' to get that $400,000 or bust. We knowed, of course, that he was too much of a gent to throw *you* down, so we thought if we could razzle-dazzle him into marryin' this tub of lard he could get the money, give her ten thousand or so, take a run up into Nevada, get a divorce ——

POLLY. Get a divorce! On what grounds?

MAYME. Lord love yuh, you don't need no grounds in Nevada. You just divorce 'em, that's all. Then we thought after doin' this he could marry you and still have $300,000 or so to the good. Some scheme, if you was to ast my opinion, which, of course, you ain't.

POLLY. But the humiliation of seeing you and this—this dishwasher claim Bert as your husband. Why wasn't I consulted?

MAYME. We didn't know you then.

DICK. We didn't even know where you lived.

POLLY. I don't like it. Back in Ohio ——

MAYME. Say! Forget it! Yuh ain't in Ohio now. You're in California, and we do things a little different out this way. Why, if a fellow was as dippy over me as Bert is over you, man, I'd do anything for him, anything. He just raves about you, mornin', noon and night.

POLLY (*eagerly*). Does he, honestly?

MAYME (*winks at* DICK). Does he? You'd oughta hear him. It's Polly this and Polly that until we've all about got Pollyitis. Why, the poor boob even cuts his meals short so he can sneak away from the table and 'phone yuh when there ain't nobody around.

POLLY. Dear, dear Bert!

MAYME. That's just what I say, dear, dear Bert!

POLLY (*turning and looking at* MAYME *suspiciously*). What?

MAYME. That is, I'd say that if *I* was you.

POLLY. Perhaps I should help dear Bert get this money.

DICK. There's no perhaps about it, Miss Palmer, you *should.*

BETTY. I should say you should.

POLLY. I really haven't looked at it in the right light, I suppose, but if you think it my *duty* to help him, I will.

STEVE (*running down-stairs*). That detective is raising the very devil up-stairs. Jack is sitting on him just at present, but ——

POLLY (*rushes to* STEVE *and throws her arms around his neck*). Steve!

STEVE (*embracing her*). Polly!

MAYME. What is it? Initiation into the Mutual Huggin' and Kissin' Association?

POLLY. It's my brother. The one I came West to find. (*To* STEVE.) Why didn't you write?

STEVE. When I came out here I was going to do wonders, but instead I went broke. I was ashamed to write and let you know; that's all. Now I am working on a ranch.

BETTY. I don't like to hurry you, but can't you let the explaining go until after we have straightened this tangle?

DICK. Yes, there's that policeman up-stairs ——

STEVE. And he's sure raising the devil in general.

DICK. You are going to help us now, aren't you, Miss Palmer?

STEVE. If you can do anything, Sis, to get us out of this mess, *do it!*

POLLY. What do you want me to do?

DICK (*takes one of* POLLY'S *arms,* MAYME *the other*). Come up-stairs and we'll see that you are fitted up to ook the part. Rich ought to be along with Bert before ong. He can't have gotten very far.

(*All start up-stairs,* BETTY *last. Others exit as* BETTY *gets about half-way up-stairs.* RICH *appears at window and calls.*)

RICH. Betty! (*She stops.*) May I speak with you a

moment? (*She turns and goes slowly down-stairs.*) Dick told me you were here.

BETTY (*going to divan*). Did he? You might have looked me up a little earlier, then. (*Sits divan.*)

RICH (*sitting beside her*). I wanted to but I was busy on this job for Bert.

BETTY. Did you find him?

RICH. Yes, he's outside the window. He sent me in to make sure his black affinity hadn't returned.

(*Pause.* BETTY *looking at* RICH *and he at her several times.*)

BETTY. Why haven't you been around to see me for the past couple of weeks?

RICH. Why? Because, Betty, I was jealous, jealous of Dick and the other fellows you have been running around with, and when I called you up and asked you to marry me ——

BETTY (*gives long sigh*). Oh, what a relief! It was you, then?

RICH (*amazed*). Of course it was me! Who else could it be?

BETTY. Oh, yes, of course, but go on.

RICH. I'm really ashamed of myself, Betty, but when I asked you if you would marry me and you said you would, I thought I would teach you a lesson, so I decided to hold you off for a while without saying anything further. A little like you had been holding me off for the last six months. (BETTY *looks at him indignantly.*) Oh, I know it wasn't a very gentlemanly thing to do, Betty, but you'll forgive me, won't you?

BETTY. I'll think about it.

RICH. But, Betty ——

BETTY. Wait until we're married, young man, just you wait.

BERT (*at window*). Did she come back?

BETTY (*running to window*). No, she didn't. Come on in; they're waiting for you.

BERT (*entering*). Who's waiting for me?

BETTY. Come and see. Come on, Rich.

(*They hurry* BERT *up-stairs.*)

GERT (*enters from kitchen, closing door after her, very quietly. Goes to 'phone.*) Hollywood 987..... Mr. Wilkins, please. (DICK *starts down-stairs. Notices* GERT *and stops.*) Miss Lamson speaking. Send my machine around. You have the address.....Yes, I believe I can play the part to perfection.....Oh! Yes indeed! We have had some rather exciting experiences here in the last hour.....Local color? It's all over me in chunks.....The other scheme? Yes, I think it is going to be a success. Have the machine here in a half-hour, please. (*Hangs up 'phone.*)

DICK (*coming down-stairs*). I thought so!

(GERT *turns quickly.*)

GERT. Just what did you think, Mr. Girard?

DICK. No wonder you could play the deserted wife so well. Might I ask your reason for working here as Miss Bingle's dishwasher, or is that one of the state secrets?

GERT. No, not exactly. My next picture is entitled "The Slavey's Romance." I wanted to see if there could possibly be a romance in the life of a slavey and, incidentally, imbibe a little local color.

DICK. Did you—imbibe the local color?

GERT (*showing her torn dress, dirty face, etc.*). Don't you see it on me?

DICK. And the romance? Did you find it?

GERT (*smiling*). How would you like to work with me in my next picture, Mr. Girard?

DICK (*eagerly*). There is nothing I would like better. But I've never had any experience.

GERT. Don't you think your experience here to-night would stand you in good stead?

DICK. But——

GERT. Do you accept my offer?

DICK. Oh, Miss Lamson——

GERT. My name is Mary—to my friends.

DICK. Mary, I—— Why, Mary! Those were your jewels you brought to me, and——

GERT. Don't worry about the jewels, Dick. They are safe. Miss Bingle had them.

DICK. Are you sure they are safe? Where are they?

GERT. In the ice-box.

DICK. Jiminy Christmas! One hundred thousand dollars' worth of jewelry in the ice-box! (*Grabs* GERT's *arm.*) Come on and let's get it before somebody else does. [*They exit kitchen.*

UNCLE (*enters* C. D. *with* AUNT. AUNT *should wear wedding dress of period twenty-five years previous to time of play, also long coat or cape, which she throws off on her entrance*). Here we are safe home again. (*Looks at* AUNT.) And to think, Henrietta, you were married in the dress you made for our wedding so long ago. There never was a prettier bride in New York. It's worth waiting twenty-five years to see you.

AUNT. Daniel! You flatterer! It is just because you are happy that you are saying those nice things about me, for how could an old woman of forty-eight make such a handsome bride?

UNCLE. Henrietta——

AUNT. There, there! I don't blame you. I am happy myself. So happy that I am going to hunt up Gert and help her return those jewels to the person from whom she took them. I'm so happy I don't want to see any one in trouble. I left her in the kitchen cleaning herself up, so suppose she is still there, for she would have a job on her hands. Come, Daniel.

[*They exit to kitchen.*

BETTY (*enters stairs supporting* POLLY *on one side:* MAYME *on the other.* POLLY *should be made up as an extremely fat woman, wearing hat and veil. Should have pieces of wood painted to look like iron in pockets, up sleeves, under belt, etc., to be removed later*). Careful, Polly! Don't fall or we'll never be able to pick you up. (*Places* POLLY R. C.) Now you stand right there. Bert can stand here. (*Points to* POLLY's *left.*) The rest can stand over there. (*Points* L.) Rich and I will

act as attendants. Miss Clifford! Will you get up and tell the happy groom and best man that everything is ready?

MAYME. Happy groom? If that guy is happy I'd hate to see him when he looks sad.

[*Exits stairs singing wedding march.*

BETTY. Just think, Polly, you are getting the man you want and $300,000 into the bargain.

POLLY. I'm so excited, Betty, that if it wasn't for this iron I have stuck around me, I couldn't stand still.

(RICH *and* MAYME *enter stairs with* BERT.)

BERT. You are not running a black one in on me again, are you?

RICH. No, this one is all right.

BERT. What's the idea of the veil?

BETTY (*to* RICH). You explained why he had to marry a fat woman, did you?

RICH. Yes, he knows it all.

BETTY (*to* BERT). As you are to be divorced as soon as you get the money, the lady doesn't want to be embarrassed should she ever meet you again.

BERT. Oh, I see! All right; let's get it over with. Come on, you three hundred pounds.

(*Stands* L. *of* POLLY, *taking her arm.*)

BETTY. Now where's Dick with that minister? We sent him after one a half-hour ago. He ought to be back by this time.

MAYME. There's a justice of the peace in the next apartment. Wouldn't he do?

BERT. Go ahead! Any old thing.

MAYME (*looks for number in 'phone book*). Hollywood 9856.....Mr. Payne? Could you come over next door and make two hearts beat as one?..... Sure! Splice 'em up.....Over at Miss Bingle's. (*To* BETTY.) He says he's got company and can't come over, but if they stand out on the porch he'll marry 'em across the court.

BERT. Perfectly all right with me; any old way.

MAYME (*in 'phone*). All right, Mr. Payne. They'll be right out. (*Hangs up 'phone.*) Now then, if we only had a jazz band everything would be right up to date, wouldn't it? Get in line, folks. Come on, Bert. (*Places* BERT C. *of stage, facing window.*) You're next, Pol—I mean you three thousand, 'scuse me, three hundred pounds. Right here. (*Places* POLLY *at* BERT'S R.) Miss King, you and Rich right here. (*Places them behind* BERT *and* POLLY.) I'll be Master of Ceremonies and lead the parade. (*Steps in front of* BERT *and* POLLY *and begins marking time.*) Left! Right! Left! Right! (*Others step into time.*) Left! Right! All ready! Shoot!

(*Leads them out window, singing, "Here comes the bride! Here comes the bride!" Man's voice heard outside: "All ready!"* MAYME *answers, "All O. K." Man's voice: "All right, line up."*)

AUNT (*enters from kitchen with* UNCLE. *They stand just inside door a moment, looking at each other*). Did you hear what Mr. Girard told that girl?

UNCLE. I did.

AUNT. All of it?

UNCLE. Every word.

AUNT. I don't often use slang, Daniel, but to borrow one of Miss Clifford's favorite expressions, "Could you beat it!"

UNCLE. No, my dear, I don't believe you could.

(*They sit divan.*)

AUNT. To think that the favorite wife and the jewels were all a part of their scheme to have Bert get that money. For a time I actually believed that was your wife, Daniel. Can you ever forgive me?

UNCLE. Certainly I can. It was worked up so well I almost believed it myself.

AUNT. No doubt I am very dumb for they told me they were going to put some sort of a scheme over, but I never dreamed it would be such a thing as this. To think of the work it took and the way they did it!

UNCLE. I don't get the drift of it even yet.

AUNT. Here! (*Hands him paper.*) It's all explained in the paper.

UNCLE (*skims over article*). And Bert was the man selected?

AUNT. Yes, his name was drawn. I don't know where he is but there is no doubt in the world they have him married to a three-hundred-pound girl by this time. Just think of it, Daniel, three hundred pounds!

UNCLE. I came here purposely to see him and take him back to Turkey with me to help me handle my affairs. I hadn't bargained though on taking a three-hundred-pound helpmate along.

AUNT. *I* will help you handle your affairs in the future, Daniel.

MAYME (*at window*). Well, it's all over but the scrappin'. (*Enters from window, going* C. *Is followed by* RICH *and* BETTY *who cross* L. BERT *goes* R., POLLY *remains at window.*) Meet Mr. and Mrs. Parker, ladies and gentlemen.

AUNT (*crossing to* BERT). Bert! You haven't married that—that—— (*Points to* POLLY. BERT *attempts to speak and then turns back on* AUNT *and stares at ceiling.*) Why, Bert! (*Door-bell rings.*) Gert! Answer the door! Oh, I forgot. (*Exits* C. D., *returning immediately with letter.*) A letter by special messenger for Mr. Parker. It is marked "To be opened just before his wedding."

BERT. Just *before* my wedding! Give it to me. (*Takes letter, opens and reads it. Then takes several bills out of envelope.*) Where is to-night's paper?

(MAYME *crosses to* RICH.)

AUNT (*hands him paper*). Here it is.

BERT (*looks for article and reads it, then turns to* MAYME *and* RICH). Did you see this article in the paper? (*No answer,* MAYME *and* RICH *looking at each other.*) I suppose I have you two to thank for the goings-on here to-night. Where's Dick? Was he in on it too?

RICH. Now, Bert, don't get sore. We only wanted to be sure you got the $400,000. It really wasn't the bet, you know.

BERT. Bet! I'd forgot all about it.

MAYME. We just couldn't see you lose out on that $400,000, Bert.

BERT. Is that so! Well, I don't get it! Do you understand? *I don't get it!* All I get is that ton of hay over there. (*Points to* POLLY.) Read that and see how your plans turned out.

(*Hands letter to* RICH *and walks* R.)

RICH (*reads*). "Now, Mr. Parker, that you have shown a little speed and pep in locating a three-hundred-pound bride in such short order, we would like to state that the article in to-night's *Herald* is merely an advertising scheme which we are using as the first effort on the part of the new publicity manager we intend engaging to handle the Mary Lamson Feature Productions which will be placed before the public with her next picture 'The Slavey's Romance.'" (*Turns toward* MAYME *and speaks.*) Mayme! We had all our work for nothing. (*Reads.*) "We are enclosing $300 for the Mrs. Parker-who-was-to-be ——"

MAYME. A dollar a pound!

RICH (*reading*). "And would request that you report at our office to-morrow morning at nine o'clock where a contract at a liberal salary will be awaiting you. Yours very truly, J. D. Wilkins, Manager, Louperex Film Corporation."

DICK (*enters from kitchen with* GERT. *She is neatly dressed, hair done up, etc. Is wearing lavallier previously recognized by* BETTY. DICK *looks at crowd on stage and then turns to* MAYME). By George! I forgot all about the minister.

MAYME. Never mind the minister. It's a fake and he don't get the money. How are we ever going to get that jewel business straightened out?

BETTY (*notices* GERT). Miss Lamson! And your lavallier ——

GERT. There is no need to worry about the jewels. When they were stolen I did it myself.

DICK. Miss Lamson, as Gert, the hired girl, has been imbibing a little local color for the past three weeks in Miss Bingle's kitchen.

UNCLE. Pardon me! Mrs. Daniel Easton.

GERT. May I congratulate you, Mrs. Daniel Easton?

AUNT. You rogue! And I nearly had you arrested for stealing your own jewels.

DICK. Ye gods! The policeman!

AUNT. Where is he?

DICK. Up-stairs, bound and gagged with two men sitting on him.

UNCLE. What for?

DICK. So he wouldn't interfere until the wedding was over. We must turn him loose.

(*All exit stairs, except* BERT *and* POLLY.)

BERT (*makes several attempts to speak*). I'm sorry Miss—I mean Mrs.—that is, just what is your name?

POLLY. Mrs. Bert Parker, I presume.

BERT (*starts*). Oh, yes, yes, so it is. (*Takes money out of pocket, looks at it a moment and then hands it to* POLLY.) I suppose this is coming to you. You of course understand that, that ——

POLLY. That what?

BERT. That this is nothing but a farce. I can't live with you. I am heartily ashamed for even having part in such a scheme. You can arrange for a divorce on the grounds of desertion or anything you think best.

POLLY. But I don't want a divorce. I don't believe in them. I married you and I intend to live with you.

BERT (*astonished*). But you must understand that it is impossible. I can't, I simply can't.

POLLY (*throwing back her veil*). Why can't you, Bert?

BERT. Polly! Was it *you* I married?

POLLY. It certainly was.

(*They embrace.* BERT *jerks away from* POLLY *and looks at her arm. Touches it and feels wood.*)

BERT. What on earth is the matter?

POLLY. Oh, I forgot! (*Removes wood from sleeves, bodice, etc.*) Dick must have robbed the junk shop for me.

BERT. What on earth ——

POLLY. To make me weigh the full three hundred pounds, silly!

(*He again attempts to embrace her, but* UNCLE, AUNT, BETTY, RICH, GERT *and* DICK *appear on stairs.* BERT *shoves hands in pocket and starts* R. *whistling.*)

UNCLE. Fifty dollars settled him all right. (*Goes to* BERT.) Now don't worry about not getting that money, my lad. I have plenty for both of us. (*Walks* C., *laughing.*) Well, well, well! What youth won't attempt. Your scheme was a good one, young folks, but you slipped up on one little thing.

DICK. What was that?

UNCLE (*to* BERT). Did you ever notice, Bert, that you always got my checks through a lawyer in Pittsburgh?

BERT (*after a moment's thought*). Come to think of it—yes.

UNCLE. Well, the Turkey in which I have been for the past twenty odd years is Turkey, Pennsylvania, a little way station on the B. & O. Railroad, where I own a few coal mines, the hardware store, the undertaking parlors and run the post-office. Come, dear.

(*Offers arm to* AUNT *and they exit library,* UNCLE *looking back over shoulder smiling. Each looks at the other, thunderstruck.* POLLY *and* BERT *extreme* R., DICK *and* GERT C., RICH *and* BETTY L.)

DICK. Anyway, we had some fun out of it.

RICH. Yes, and I would have won my bet, too, if we hadn't got switched, for she *did* throw you down, Bert.

POLLY. But not for good.

STEVE } (*together: coming part way down-stairs*)
JACK } When do we get some real clothes?

DICK. Help yourself to mine.
RICH. Mine, too. Take all you want.

(STEVE *and* JACK *exit stairs.* RICH *and* BETTY, BERT *and* POLLY *engage in conversation.*)

GERT. Are you going to accept the proposition of the Louperex Studio, Mr. Parker? (BERT *pays no attention to her.*) Mr. Parker!—Mr. Parker!

DICK (*goes to* BERT *and yells in his ear*). Mr. Parker! The lady wants to speak to you!

BERT (*jumps*). You needn't yell! I'm not hard of hearing.

DICK. Oh no! Not at all!

GERT (*smiling*). I merely asked if you are going to accept the proposition of the Louperex Studio, Mr. Parker?

BERT. You bet I am! I got the girl I want and a good job into the bargain. Rich can go and help Uncle run the undertaking parlors. What puzzles me, though, is how they picked on me?

GERT (*smiling*). I could tell you how that happened. (*All turn toward her.*) But I won't. (*Others resume conversation.*) How about my offer, Mr.—er—Dick?

DICK. It would be glorious Mary, and it's just what I have always wanted, but could I do it?

GERT. Let me be the judge of that. Some day you might even be my leading man.

DICK. I would like to be that for life, Mary.

(*Each of the boys puts arm around girl to whom speaking and bends to kiss her as* MAYME *enters stairs.*)

MAYME (*on stairs*). Hey! Break away! Break away!

(*They all turn and look at* MAYME *indignantly a moment. Then boys kiss the girls.*)

QUICK CURTAIN

A RIP SNORTING MELODRAMA

The Cross-Eyed Parrot

By Ted and Virginia Maxwell

A Melodramatic Comedy in Three Acts. 6m., 5w. 1 int., 1 ex. Time, full evening. The plot hinges around a kidnapper, Dr. Von Elm, who is terrorizing the wealthy, holding his victims for enormous ransom. Hayne, the lead, and Plummy, his pal, decide to solve the mystery of this man's actions, when Hayne's sister is kidnapped. On Dr. Von Elm's Island, they encounter many humorous and mysterious situations, the most intriguing of all, when an eccentric chiropractor whispers to them, that the answer to all they are seeking lies in "yards and yards of twine, a cross-eyed parrot and a red-headed woman." First the parrot, and then the red-headed woman cross their vision, bringing screams of laughter. There are two charming love stories between Hayne and Teja, the Doctor's daughter, and Plummy and Lisle, Hayne's sister, and a more sinister affair between Dr. Von Elm and the red-headed woman. Enormously successful in production at the Y. M. C. U., Boston.

THE PLAYERS

S. Pinal Kord	Hughson
Hayne Frawley	Morgan
Plummer Collins	Margot
Dr. Herz Von Elm	Edna West
Teja Von Elm	Betty Danileon
Lisle Frawley	

ACT I. Breakfast-room in the Frawley home. Present time. Morning in summer.

ACT II. Scene 1. The same afternoon. The garden in front of the main building, Dr. Von Elm's island.
Scene 2. The same setting. That evening at ten-thirty.

ACT III. Scene 1. The same setting. One week later than Act II.
Scene 2. The same evening. Midnight. Same setting.

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Books Thirty-Five Cents Each

WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

Fixing It For Father

By J. C. McMullen

A Farce in Three Acts. 6m., 5w. One easy interior. Fat was a very staid professor of a very staid college. He was ceiving under his name, letters for his brother-in-law, a high step who was, unknown to the professor, carrying on a correspond with a matrimonial agency widow. The professor's two daught found the letters and what they and their two boy "friends" did do to Father isn't worth telling. One of the boys decides he meet the widow as the Professor and disgust her with profess in general. The other boy decides that he, as the widow, will m the Professor and disgust him with widows. They meet—e other and the fun commences. There are 11 characters of eq importance, the dialogue is snappy and the action rapid. Th isn't a dull moment in two hours. If you are looking for a play an evening of culture, don't bother with this, but if you are look for a farce that starts with a bang, rushes its way through th acts and winds up with a wallop, by all means, try it.

THE CAST

Prof. John Risdon, of Westport College.
Elinor and Beatrice, his daughters.
Dick Cunard, his brother-in-law.
Emma Blanchard, his sister-in-law.
William Merton, his boyhood friend.
Harold, Merton's son.
Harry Chalmers, in love with Beatrice.
Jack Denton, in love with Elinor.
Fanchon La Vonde, the widow.
Aunt Lize, the autocrat of the Risdon household.

Act I. Living-room of the Professor's home, at Westport, n New York, 6:00 o'clock, Friday evening.

Act II. The same. 7:15 P. M.

Act III. The same. 8:00 P. M.

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WALTER H. BAKER COMPANY

41 Winter Street, Boston, Mass.

Be An Optimist

By Adam Applebud

The Quintessence of Nonsense in Three Acts. 6m., 7w., all equally important, with the opportunity, if desired, to use several "supers" with no lines. 2 simple interiors. Adam Applebud certainly blossomed forth with as many original situations and bits of business as a centipede has pedal extremities when he wrote "Be An Optimist." Funnier things happen than you ever dreamed of after a midnight encounter with a welsh-rarebit. For instance, can you imagine manufacturing a mummy with a love-sick swain, surgical bandages and a pail of coffee as the chief ingredients? Also, why are shot-guns and baseball bats vital to the antique business to say nothing of sledge-hammers and tooth-brushes? And why should Madame Goopher, the trance medium, faint when she suddenly discovers she isn't a liar after all? Would you stand within three feet of your best pal and listen to him make love to your girl and hear her ask him for a kiss? Our hero does, and he is helpless under the prevailing circumstances. The property man won't be worried as the "props" most important to the play are found in every home. The characters are more assorted than the component parts of boarding-house hash, and they will keep the laugh center in your medulla working livelier than a cash register in a bargain basement. Warning! If you yearn for "Culchaw" or have a burning desire to aid in the uplift of the "drahma," don't open a copy of "Be An Optimist"; but if you want the rafters of the old town hall to ring with laughter, hop to it!

THE PEOPLE OF THE PLAY AS YOU MEET THEM

Isaac Golditch, antiquer, of the Golditch Art Shop.
Becky, his daughter.
Pietro D'Angelo Caccialino, expert worm-holer.
Jimmie Maynard, "the poor stiff."
Mildred Clinton, who is in love and likes it.
Mrs. Clinton, "why mother-in-law jokes are true."
Mike, just what his name suggests.
Ray Hudson, a friend in need, but scarcely in deed.
Miss Hull, interior decorator.
Maggie, not green—for "greenness" wears off, so call her stupid.
Ethel Peabody, who defies love to affect her.
Spencer, a paid guest.
Madame Goopher, dispenser of spirits.
Guests at the Ball.

They Are Seen

During Act I—In the Golditch Art Shop. Morning.
During Act II—In Mrs. Clinton's Home. Afternoon.
During Act III—Still at Mrs. Clinton's. The next evening.

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